GITA MAKARANDA

BY

SWAMI VIDYAPRAKASHANANDA

Sri Suka Brahma Ashram

KALAHASTI

Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh - India.

1980

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Om

FOREWORD

Makaranda means honey. The Bhagavad Gita is sweet and relishing like honey. So this work is entitled Gita Makaranda. Honey is a potent antidote to different kinds of bodily diseases. So also the Gita Makaranda is a powerful purifying agent which washes away the accumulated sins and bestows the supreme bliss of liberation on mankind

The bee collects honey from different flowers The Upanishads are the most beautiful flowers of Divine Knowledge and Lord Krishna drew the honey of the Gita from the Upanishads May the seekers of spiritual truth drew their inspiration and illumination from the Gita and fulfil the purpose of human existence.

On the banks of the sacred river Swarnamukhi in Kalahasti (a pilgrim-centre in Andhra Pradesh-India) is situated a peaceful and beautiful hermitage well known as Sri Suka Brahma Ashram. The founder of that Ashram Swami Vidya Prakashananda is a saintly personality working with untiring zeal to spread the message of the Gita through his lectures and publications. He is the author of this illustrious book Gita Makaranda This book contains the text with explanatory introduction, word to word meaning, substance, elaborate commentary and questions and answers.

This book was first published in Telugu in 1963. Since then it continued increasingly popular among the Telugu-knowing public A request came to the author from several quarters that his Telugu commentary on the Bhagavad Gita might also be rendered into English for the benefit of the larger non-Telugu knowing public. He has complied with the request and therefore we are enabled to bring out this English version The meritorious services of Sri Durbha Ramamurty Professor of English, Nellore) need special mention here for his fine rendering of the original into English. We express our sincere thanks to him and to all those who have extended co-operation in publishing this eminent work.

—*PUBLISHER*

PRAYER TO MOTHER-GITA

O Divine Mother Gita! Mother of the Universe! K ledge Incarnate! You have shown the way to peace th the horrid wilderness of *Samsara* where a thousand diffi harass our mortal existance.

The darkness of ignorance is vanishing; The shack *Samsara* are breaking; The path of action is shining O Mother Divine! a thousand salutations to you!

When Lord Krishna dropped his mortal coil, He s you to us, as our guide, philosopher, and friend; you a living image of the Lord and in you we take refuge O M Gita!

Blessed giver of Knowledge! The elders say never man forget his creator, as well as the moral law and c conduct taught and prescribed by Him. Thus it is ou to remember you and follow the *Dharma* taught by you.

Bestower of Self-realisation! Your message is uni No religion, no creed is denounced by you; you have proc to the world the great hope that the worst sinners a attain the purest sainthood, that the weak and feeble- also can become strong and valiant by following your la

You have shown a thousand paths to mankind f purification and celestail joy! Oh! Ganges of Kno everflowing and flooding the heart of mankind! Essence of the Upanishads! to us who are drifting aimlessly in th of *Samsara*, you are the ferry boat to take us across the pools of earthly trials and temptations!

O Mother Divine! Bless us with devotion, knowle dispassion! Bless us with strength and power to serve yo and soul throughout our life!

May your benedictions be always upon us—this prayer to you, O blessed and blissful Mother!



గీతాచార్యులు

LORD SRI KRISHNA
TEACHER OF THE CELESTIAL SONG
THE BHAGAVAD GITA

चेतो भृंग भ्रमसि वृथा
भवमरु भूमौ विरसायाम्
पिब पिब गीतामकरंदं
यदुपति मुखकमल भवाढ्यम्

Chetobhringa bhramasi vridha
Bhavamarubhumau virasayam
Piba piba Gitamakarandam
Yadupati mukhakamala bhavadhyam.

O mind, like the bee seeking honey,
Why do you wander
In the arid sands of *Samsara*,
Which like the mirage
Draws you away into dry deserts ?
Drink, drink,
The honey of Gita,
Flowing from the Lotus-face
Of Lord Sri Krishna !

GITA — A MIRACULOUS REMEDY FOR LIFE'S TRAGEDIES.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to Bhagavad Gita and find a verse to comfort me and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they had not left any visible and indelible effect on me I owe it to the teachings of Bhagavad Gita.

Blessed is the person who studies the Gita daily.
Twice blessed is he who lives in the spirit of the Gita.
Thrice blessed is he who has realised the Knowledg · of the Gita.



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SWAMI VIDYAPRAKASHANANDA

AUTHOR OF THE COMMENTARY "GITA MAKARANDA"

MESSAGE OF THE GITA

'BE FEARLESS'

क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ २ - ३

Klaibyam ma sma gamah partha nai' tat tvayyupapadyate ।
Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktvo' ttistha Paramtapa ॥

"O Arjuna ! Do not yield to impotence. It does not befit you. Cast off this wretched weakness of heart. Arise, O scorcher of enemies !"

If one reads this one sloka he gets all the merits of reading the entire Gita; for, in this one sloka lies imbedded the whole message of the Gita

— *SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

GITA - THE ETERNAL TREASURE OF MANKIN

Swami Vivekananda - In Gita truths are beautifully a together in their proper places like a fine garlan boquet of choicest flowers.

Mahatma Gandhi - Gita contains treasures of knowledg me the Gita became an infallible guide of cond became my dictionary of daily reference. I turne for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. votary of the Gita ever dwells in perennial joy and

Tilak — In the literature of the whole world there is n like the Gita. It is a most luminous and priceless g takes us to the supreme bliss.

Malayala Swami — To cross the ocean of earthly lif enough to read the Gita and act according to its tea

Swami Sivananda — Bhagavad Gita is a universal scr It is the eternal guide of man. It leads him fr unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from mo to immortality Study the Gita Live in the spirit Gita. Become immortal. Enjoy peace and bliss he now.

Annie Besant — Among the priceless teachings that m found in the great poem of the Mahabharata there i so rare and precious as Bhagavad Gita. (The Lord's Since it fell from the divine lips of Sri Krishna on th of battle and stilled the surging emotions of his d and friend, how many troubled hearts has it quiete strengthened ! How many weary souls has it led to H

COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD IN THE GITA

1) Cast off the weakness of heart. Yield not to impotence. Stand up !
2) The contacts of the senses with their objects are impermanent. Bear them bravely !
3) If you are slain (in the course of your duty) you will obtain heaven. If you are victorious you will enjoy the earth. Therefore rise up resolved to do your duty.
4) Thy right is to work only, lay not claim to its fruits !
5) Perform action being fixed in Yoga abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure.
6) With the mind centred on the self free from egoism perform your duty.
7) Control the senses first and kill the sinful desire.
8) Knowing the *Atman* as superior to the intellect restraining the mind by the Self slay the enemy of desire.
9) With the sword of knowledge cut asunder the doubt about the Self and be established in Yoga ! Stand up !
10) At all times remember Me (*Atman*) only and do your duty. With the mind and intellect fixed in Me thou shalt come to Me alone.
11) At all times be steadfast in Yoga.
12) Whoever offers me with pure-mind and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water that I accept.
13) Fix thy mind on Me. Be devoted to Me. Sacrifice to Me. Thou shalt come to Me
14) Stand up ! Conquer the enemies (of desire etc). Enjoy the unrivalled kingdom *Atma Samrajya*.
15) Seek refuge in Him alone with all your heart. By His Grace you shall obtain supreme peace and eternal abode.
16) Take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins. Grieve not.

SIMILES INTRODUCED IN THE GIT

1) Just as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and new ones, so also the self throws away its worn-ou and takes other fresh bodies.
2) To an enlightened person who has known the Self Vedas are of as much use as is a reservoir of wat place where there is flood.
3) When the Yogi, like the tortoise drawing back it into its own shell, withdraws all the senses from the objects, his wisdom is firmly fixed.
4) As the ocean is filled with water flowing into it fi sides and remains immovable, so the man into wh desires flow but is not a bit affected attains peace a the man who craves the desires.
5) As the ignorant man works with attachment to acti should the wise act without attachment for the welf the World.
6) As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by du embryo by the amnion, so this knowledge of the enveloped by lust and anger.
7) Just as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, even so t of knowledge destroys all actions.
8) He who acts placing all actions in the eternal, givi attachment is unaffected by sin like the lotus leaf by
9) As the lamp in the windless place does not flicker to is compared the Yogi of controlled mind practising with self through *Dhyana-Yoga*.
10) Restless is the mind turbulent and unyielding and it difficult to control it as the wind.
11) There is nothing higher than I (*Atman*). All this is on Me as clusters of gems on a string.
12) Just as the mighty wind moving everywhere is resti ether, even so know that all beings are in Me.

13) If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky that would resemble the glory of that mighty being.

14) As the innumerable water-currents of rivers flow verily to the ocean so these warriors of the earth enter thy flaming mouths.

15) Just as the moths for destruction rush into the flaming fire with quickened speed so also these worlds rush into thy flaming mouths for destruction with quickened speed.

16) This body is called the field. He who knows the field is known as the knower of the field.

17) As the all-pervading ether because of its subtility is not tainted by dust etc., so also *Paramatma* pervading the body everywhere is not tainted by the qualities of the body.

18) Just as the one sun illumines this whole world, so the '*kshetrajna*' (the Lord of the field) illumines the entire field (*kshetram*).

19) The wise speak of the Aswatha-tree of *Samsara* having its roots above and branches below.

20) The branches of this tree of *Samsara* are nourished by *Gunas* The sense-objects are its tender buds. It spreads downwards and upwards, its roots causing bondage by action are stretched forth downwards and upwards also.

21) When the *Jiva* obtains a body and when he leaves it he takes these (tendencies) and goes with them, as the wind takes the scents from the flowers.

22) The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings causing all beings revolve like puppets by his illusive power (*Maya*).

EFFECTS OF GITA-SLOKA-JAPA

Every Sloka of Bhagavad Gita is a *Mantra*. Just repetition of a *Mantra* bestows beneficial results so al repetition of the verses of Bhagavad Gita produces wo effects. The salutary effects of the repetition of certain in the Gita are given below. Those wishing to obtain good results may repeat the slokas with utmost fai devotion.

(1) For victory over mind :-

Repeat the Sloka—

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥

Sanaih-sanair uparamed buddhya dhrtigrhitaya ।
Atma samstham manah kritva na kimchidapi chintayet ॥

(2) For success in meditation :-

Repeat the Sloka—

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥

Yato yato nischarati manaschanchala masthiram ।
Tatastato niyamyaitadatmanyeva vasham nayet ॥

(3) For removal of obstacles in sadhana :-

Repeat the Sloka –

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥

Bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvaloka mahesvaram ।
Suhridam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam shantimricchati ॥

(4) For progress in wisdom :-

Repeat the Sloka –

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

Sarvabhuta sthitam yo mam bhajatyekatvamasthitah ।
Sarvatha vartamanopi sa yogi mayi vartate ॥ (6-31)

(5) **For beholding God everywhere :-**

Repeat the Sloka -

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७-७

Mattah parataram nanyat kimchidasti Dhananjaya ।
Mayi sarvamidam protam sutre manigana iva ॥ (7-7)

(6) **For attainment of Yoga-kshema :-**

Repeat the Sloka -

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९-२२

Ananyas chintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate ।
Tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham ॥ (9-22)

(7) **For removal of enemies like desire etc. :-**

Repeat the Sloka —

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ३-४३

Evam buddheh param buddhva
Samstabhya'tmanamatmana ।
Jahi satrum mahabaho
Kamarupam durasadam ॥ (3-43)

(8) **For acquirement of divine-grace :-**

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ ९-२७

Yat karoshi yad asnasi yajjuhoshi dadasi yat ।
Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva madarpanam ॥

(9-27)

9) **For becoming yoga - yukta :-**

Repeat the Sloka -

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ १०-१०

Tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam ।
Dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mam upayanti te ॥ (10-10)

10) **For steadfastness and progress in devotion :-**

Repeat the Sloka :-

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं निधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया ततं विश्वमनन्तरूप ॥ ११-३८

Tvam adidevah purushah puranas
Tvam asya visvasya param nidhanam ।
Vetta'si vedyam cha param cha dhama
Tvaya tatam visvam ananta rupa ॥ (11-38)

11) **For wiping off delusion :-**

Repeat the Sloka -

नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमोऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
अनन्तवीर्यामितविक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं समाप्नोषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥ ११-४०

Namah purastad atha pristhataste
Namostu te sarvata eva sarva ।
Ananta viryamita vikramastvam
Sarvam samapnoshi tato'si sarvah ॥ (11-40)

12) **For attainment of the grace of God :-**

Repeat the Sloka :-

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यस्य गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ ११-४३

Pitasi lokasya characharasya
Twamasya poojyasya gururgariyan ।
Natvatsamostyabhyadhikah kutonyo
Lokatraye pyapratimaprabhava ॥ (11-43)

(13) For fitness for God - realisation :-

Repeat the Sloka -

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ १८-६६

Sarvadharman parityajya mam ekam sharanam vraja ।
Aham tva sarvapapebhyo moksayishyami ma suchah ॥ (18-66)

(14 For purification of the mind :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ १३-१३

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvato 'kshisiromukham ।
Sarvatah srutimal loke sarvam avritya tisthati ॥ (13-13)

(15 For cessation of anger :-

Repeat the Sloka -

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो
मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥ १५-१५

Sarvasya chaham hridi sannivisto
Mattah smritirgnanamapohanam cha ।
Vedaischa sarvairahameva vedyo
Vedantakrit vedavideva chaham ॥ (15-15)

16) For attainment of the grace of God :-

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ १८-७८

Yatra yogeswarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah ।
Tatra srir vijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama ॥ (18-78)

(17) For success in undertakings :-

Repeat the Sloka -

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ३-४३

Evam budheh param buddhva samstabhyatmana matmana ।
Jahi satrum mahabaho kamarupam durasadam ॥ (3-43)

(18) For healing diseases :-

Repeat the Sloka -

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७-७

Mattah parataram nanyat kinchidasti dhananjaya ।
Mayi sarvamidam protam sutre manigana iva ॥ (7-7)

(19) For eradication of miseries :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोक महेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ ५-२९

Bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvaloka maheswaram ।
Suhridam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam santimrichati ॥ (5-29)

(20) For attainment of wealth :-

Repeat the Sloka -

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५-५

Yat samkhyaih prapyate sthanam tadyogairapi gamyate ।
Ekam samkhyam cha yogam cha yah pasyati sa pasyati ॥ (5-5)

(21) For rooting out fear :-

Repeat the Sloka -

श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपस्तत्त्रिविधं नरैः ।
अफलाकाङ्क्षिभिर्युक्तैः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते ॥ १७-१७

Sraddhaya paraya taptam tapastat trividham naraih ।
Aphalakanshubhir yuktaih satvikam parichakshate ॥ (17-17)

(22) For removal of obstacles :-

Repeat the Sloka –

दिव्यमाल्याम्बरधरं दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ।
सर्वाश्चर्यमयं देवं अनन्तं विश्वतो मुखम् ॥ ११-११

Divyamalyambaradharam divyagandhanulepanam ।
Sarvascharyamayam devam anantam viswato mukham ॥ (11-11)

(23) For driving off evil-spirits (Devils) :-

Repeat the Sloka :-

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या
जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति
सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ ११-३६

Sthane hrishikesa tava prakirtya
Jagat prahrishyaty anurajyate cha ।
Rakshamsi bhitani diso dravanti
Sarve namasyanti cha siddhasamghah ॥ (11-36)

गीताकल्पतरुं भजे भगवता कृष्णेन संरोपितं
वेदव्यासविवर्धितं श्रुतिशिरोबीजं प्रबोधांकुरम् ।
नानाशास्त्र रहस्य शाखमरतिक्षान्ति प्रवालाङ्कितं
कृष्णांघ्रिद्वय भक्तिपुष्पसुरभिं मोक्षप्रदं ज्ञानिनाम् ॥

Gita Kalpatarum bhaje bhagavata Krishnena samropitam
Vedavyasa vivardhitam sruti sirobeejam prabodhankuram
Nanasastra rahasyasakham aratikshantipravalankitam
Krishnaghridvaya bhaki pushpa surabhim mokshapradam jnaninam

I worship the Gita, the wish-yielding plant of Heaven, planted by Lord Krishna. This heavenly plant is nourished by Veda Vyasa ; the Upanishads are its seed ; Knowledge is its sprout ; the secrets of all *Sastras* are its branches ; renunciation and forbearance are its blossom ; devotion to Lord Krishna is its fragrant flower ; and on the knowers of truth it confers Liberation.

Gita in one verse

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो
यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूति
र्ध्रुवानीतिर्मतिर्मम ।

Yatra yogeeswarah krishno yatra partho dhanurdharah
Tatra srirvijayo bhutir dhruva nitir matir mama

Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *Yoga*, wherever is Partha, the wielder of the bow, there are prosperity, victory, expansion and sound policy; such is my conviction.

श्री कृष्ण ध्यानम्

MEDITATION ON SRI KRISHNA

प्रपन्नपारिजाताय तोत्रवेत्रैकपाणये ।
ज्ञानमुद्राय कृष्णाय गीतामृतदुहे नमः ॥ ३

Prapanna parijataya totravetraika panaye ।
Jnana mudraya krishnaya gitamrita duhe namah ॥

Salutation to Krishna, the milker of Gita nectar, who like the heavenly plant fulfills all the wishes of those who take refuge in Him; who holds the cowherd cane in the hand, and whose hand is poised as the symbol of knowledge.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् ।
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ ५

Vasudeva sutam devam kamsa chanura mardanam ।
Devaki paramanandam krishnam vande jagad gurum ॥

I salute Krishna, the world-teacher, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura, the supreme joy of Devaki.

श्री गीता ध्यानम्

SRI GITA DHYANAM

MEDITATION ON THE GITA

ॐ पार्थाय प्रतिबोधितां भगवता नारायणेन स्वयं
व्यासेन ग्रथितां पुराणमुनिना मध्ये महाभारतम् ।
अद्वैतामृतवर्षिणीं भगवतीं अष्टादशाध्यायिनीं
अंब त्वामनुसन्दधामि भगवद्गीते भवद्वेषिणीम् ॥ १

Om parthaya pratibodhitam
Bhagavata narayanena svayam
Vyasena grathitam purana munina
Madhye Mahabharatam ।
advaitamritavarshinim bhagavatim
Astadasadhyayinim
Amba tvam anusandadhami Bhagavadgite
Bhavadveshinim ॥

O Bhagavad Gita! with which Lord Narayana Himself enlightened Arjuna, which was incorporated in the middle of Mahabharata by the ancient Muni, Vyasa, the Divine Mother, the showerer of the Nectar of Advaita, elaborated in eighteen chapters, on Thee, I meditate.

पाराशर्यवचः सरोजममलं गीतार्थगन्धोत्कटं
नानाख्यानककेसरं हरिकथासंबोधनाबोधितम् ।
लोके सज्जनषट्पदैरहरहः पेपीयमानं मुदा
भूयाद्भारतपङ्कजं कलिमलप्रध्वंसिनः श्रेयसे ॥ ७

Parasarya vachah sarojam amalam
Gitartha gandhotkatam
Nanakhyanaka kesaram hari katha
Sambodhana bodhitam ।

Loke sajjana shatpadair aharahah
Pepiyamanam muda
Bhuyad bharata pankajam kalimala
Pradhyamsinah sreyase ||

May this lotus of the Mahabharata (Bhagavad Gita) born in the lake of the words of Veda Vyasa, sweet with the fragrance of the meaning of the Gita, with many stories as its stamens, fully opened by the discourses on God, the destroyer of the sins of Kali Age and drunk happily by the bees of good men in the world day by day, become the bestower of good to us.

संसार सागरं घोरं
तर्तुमिच्छति यो नरः
गीतानावं समासाद्य
पारं याति सुखेन सः ।

Samsarasagaram ghoram tarthumicchati yo narah
Gita navam samasadya param yati sukhena sah. ||

He who wishes to cross the horrid ocean of earthly existence, can, with the aid of the boat Gita, easily reach the shore.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः ।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥ २

Sarvopanishado gavo dogdha gopala nandanah ।
Partho vatsah sudhir bhokta dugdham gitamritam mahat ||

The Upanishads are the cows; the milker is Krishna; Partha is the calf; men of purified intellect are the drinkers; and the milk is the supreme nectar of Gita.

भीष्मद्रोणतटा जयद्रथजला गान्धारनीलोत्पला
शल्यग्राहवती कृपेण वहनी कर्णेन वेलाकुला ।
अश्वत्थामविकर्णघोरमकरा दुर्योधनावर्तिनी
सोत्तीर्णा खलु पाण्डवै रणनदी कैवर्तकः केशवः ॥ ६

Bhishma drona tata jayadratha jala gandhara nilotpala
Salya grahavati kripena vahani karnena velakula ।

Aswatthama vikarna ghora makara duryodhanavartini
Sottirna khalu pandavai rana nadi kaivartakah kest

The battle river whose banks were Bhishma and whose water was Jayadradha, whose blue lily was the Gandhara, whose crocodile was Salya, whose current was whose wave was Karna, whose terrible alligators were thama and Vikarna, whose whirlpool was Duryodhar such was crossed over by the Pandavas, with Krishna ferry-man.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्दमाधवम् ॥

Mukam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim ।
Yatkripa tam aham vande paramananda madhavam ||

I salute Krishna, the source of supreme bliss, whose makes the dumb eloquent, and the cripple leap over mot

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः स्तवैः
वेदैः साङ्गपदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।
ध्यानावस्थित तद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनो
यस्यान्तं न विदुः सुरासुरगणा देवाय तस्मै नमः ॥

Yam brahma varunendra rudra marutah
Stunvanti divyaih stovaih
Vedaih sanga pada kramopanishadair gayanti
Yam samagah ।
Dhyanavasthita tadgatena manasa
Pasyanti yam yogino
Yasyantam na viduh surasuragana
Devaya tasmai namah ||

Salutations to that God whom Brahma, Varuna, Rudra and the Maruts praise with divine hymns, wh chanters of Sama Veda sing by Vedas and their *Angas* *Pada* and *Krama* methods and by the Upanishads, wh Yogis see with their minds absorbed in him through med and whose end the hosts of Devas and Asuras know not

नमोऽस्तु ते व्यास विशालबुद्धे फुल्लारविन्दायतपत्रनेत्र ।
येन त्वया भारततैलपूर्णः प्रज्वालितो ज्ञानमयः प्रदीपः ॥ २

Namo 'stu te vyasa vishala buddhe
Phullaravindayata patra netra ।
Yena tvaya bharata tailapurnah
Prajvalito jnanamayah pradipah ॥

Salutations to you, O Vyasa, of wide and profound intellect, with eyes like the petals of the full-blown Lotus, who lighted the lamp of knowledge, filled with the oil of Mahabharata.

श्री गीता माहात्म्यम्

GITA MAHATMYAM

THE GREATNESS OF THE GITA

धरोवाच

भगवन् परमेशान भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
प्रारब्धं भुज्यमानस्य कथं भवति हे प्रभो ॥ १

Dharo 'vacha :

Bhagavan paramesana bhaktiravyabhicharini ।
Prarabdham bhujyamanasya katham bhavati he prabho ॥

Dhara (the Earth) said :

O blessed Lord, Ruler Supreme, Adorable One! how may he who is bound by his past *karma* gain constant devotion ?

विष्णुरुवाच

प्रारब्धं भुज्यमानोऽपि गीताभ्यासरतः सदा ।
स मुक्तः स सुखी लोके कर्मणा नोपलिप्यते ॥ १

Vishnuruvacha :

Prarabdham bhujyamanopi gita 'bhyasaratah sada ।
Sa muktah sa sukhi loke karmana no 'palipyate ॥

The Lord Vishnu said :

Even he who is subject to past *karma* can be a liberated man, happy in this world, if he is devoted to the practice of Gita. No *karma* can taint him.

महापापादिपापानि गीताध्यानं करोति चेत् ।
क्वचित्स्पर्शं न कुर्वन्ति नलिनीदलमम्भसा ॥ २

Mahapapadipapani gita dhyanam karoti chet ।
Kvachit sparsam na kurvanti nalinidalamambhasa ॥

No sin however henious can ever affect him who meditates on Gita. He lives untainted like the lotus leaf in the water.

गीतायाः पुस्तकं यत्र यत्र पाठः प्रवर्तते ।
तत्र सर्वाणि तीर्थानि प्रयागादीनि तत्र वै ॥ ४

Gitayah pustakam yatra yatra pathah pravartate ।
Tatra sarvani tirthani prayagadini tatra vai ॥

Where the book Gita is kept, where the Gita is studied, verily there are all the sacred places like Prayaga and other sanctums.

सर्वे देवाश्च ऋषयो योगिनः पन्नगाश्च ये ।
गोपाला गोपिका वापि नारदोद्धवपार्षदैः ।
सहायो जायते शीघ्रं यत्र गीता प्रवर्तते ॥ ५

Sarve devascha rishayo yoginah pannagascha ye ।
Gopala gopika va 'pi naradoddhavaparshadaih ॥
Sahayo jayate sighram yatra gita pravartate ।

The Devas, the Rishis, the Yogins, the Pannagas, the Gopalas, the Gopies, Narada, Uddhava and the whole hosts of their comrades, are all present there where the Gita is practised. They come quickly to the aid of the man who practises the teachings of the Gita.

यत्र गीताविचारश्च पठनं पाठनं श्रुतम् ।
तत्राहं निश्चितं पृथ्वि निवसामि सदैव हि ॥ ६

Yatra gitavicharascha pathanam pathanam srutam ।
Tatra 'ham nischitam prithvi nivasami sadaiva hi ॥

O Earth, where the Gita is studied, chanted, and heard, there, unfailingly and undoubtedly am I present.

गीताश्रयोऽहं तिष्ठामि गीता मे चोत्तमं गृहम् ।
गीताज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य त्रीन्लोकान्पालयाम्यहम् ॥ ७

Gita 'srayo 'ham tisthami gita me chottamam griham ।
Gitajnanamupasritya trin lokan palayamyaham ॥

I abide in the refuge of the Gita; Gita is my supreme abode; I rule over the three worlds by the wisdom of the Gita

गीता मे परमा विद्या ब्रह्मरूपा न संशयः ।
अर्धमात्राक्षरा नित्या स्वानिर्वाच्यपदात्मिका ॥ ८

Gita me parama vidya brahma rupa na samsayah ।
Ardhamatrakshara nitya svanirvachya padatmika ॥

The Gita is my Knowledge Supreme; it is undoubtedly the embodiment of Brahman; this knowledge is absolute; it is imperishable, eternal, the essence of My indefinable state.

चिदानन्देन कृष्णेन प्रोक्ता स्वमुखतोऽर्जुनम् ।
वेदत्रयी परानंदा तत्त्वार्थ ज्ञानमंजसा ॥ ९

Chidanandena krishnena prokta svamukhato 'rjunam ।
Veda trayi parananda tattvartha jnana manjasa ॥

The Gita comprises all the three Vedas; it is blissful; it brings home to the heart of the aspirant the true nature of the Self immediately; it is declared by the All-knowing and Blessed Krishna Himself to Arjuna.

योऽष्टादशजपेन्नित्यं नरो निश्चलमानसः ।
ज्ञानसिद्धिं स लभते ततो याति परं पदम् ॥ १०

Yo 'stadasa japennityam naro nischalamanasah ।
Jnanasiddhim sa labhate tato yati param padam ॥

That man who recites the eighteen chapters of the Gita with a firm mind, gains perfection in knowledge and thereby reaches the supreme state.

पाठेऽसमर्थस्सम्पूर्णे तदऽर्धं पाठमाचरेत् ।
तदा गोदानजं पुण्यं लभते नात्र संशयः ॥ ११

Pathe 'samarthas sampurne tadardham pathamacharet ।
Tada godanajam punyam labhate na 'tra samsayah ॥

If the whole of the Gita cannot be recited, half of it may be recited; through that act the reciter acquires the merit equal to the gift of a cow. There is no doubt about it.

त्रिभागं पठमानस्तु गङ्गास्नानफलं लभेत् ।
षडंशं जपमानस्तु सोमयागफलं लभेत् ॥ १

Tribhagam pathamanastu gangasnanaphalam labhet ।
Shadamsam japamanastu somayagaphalam labhet ॥

He who recites a third part of the Gita acquires the mer of bathing in the Ganges; he who recites a sixth part, gets tl fruit of the *Soma*-sacrifice.

एकाध्यायं तु यो नित्यं पठते भक्तिसंयुतः ।
रुद्रलोकमवाप्नोति गणो भूत्वा वसेच्चिरम् ॥ १

Eka 'dhyayam tu yo nityam pathate bhakti samyutah ।
Rudralokamavapnoti gano bhutva vasechiram ॥

Even he who reads only one chapter a day with devotic goes to Rudraloka, and there lives long as a Gana (an attendai of Siva).

अध्यायश्लोकपादं वा नित्यं यः पठते नरः ।
स याति नरतां यावन्मनुकालं वसुन्धरे ॥ १

Adhyaya slokapadam va nityam yah pathate narah ।
Sa yati naratam avan manukalam vasundhare ॥

O Earth, he who reads one fourth of a chapter, or a stan: daily, attains human birth throughout the duration of a *Man*

गीतायाः श्लोकदशकं सप्त पञ्च चतुष्टयम् ।
द्वौ त्रीनेकं तदर्धं वा श्लोकानां यः पठेन्नरः ॥ १

चन्द्रलोकमवाप्नोति वर्षाणामयुतं ध्रुवम् ।
गीतापाठसमायुक्तो मृतो मानुषतां व्रजेत् ॥ १

Gitayah sloka dasakam sapta pancha chatustayam
Dvau trinekam tad ordham va slokanam yah pathe

Chandralokamavapnoti varshanamayutam dhruvam ।
Gitapatha samayukto mrito manushatam vrajet ॥

He who recites ten, seven, five, four, three or two or even one half of a sloka of the Gita, certainly *Chandraloka* for ten thousand years. He who leaves th while reading the Gita, obtains the region of Man.

गीताभ्यासं पुनः कृत्वा लभते मुक्तिमुत्तमाम् ।
गीतेत्युच्चारसंयुक्तो म्रियमाणो गतिं लभेत् ॥

Gita 'bhyasam punah kritva labhate muktimuttamam ।
Gitetyuchara samyukto mriyamano gatim labhet ॥

Practising the Gita again and again man attains s *Mukti*. The dying man, uttering the word 'Gita' will the Goal.

गीतार्थश्रवणाऽऽसक्तो महापापयुतोऽपि वा ।
वैकुण्ठं समवाप्नोति विष्णुना सह मोदते ॥

Gita 'rtha sravana 'sakto mahapapayuto 'pi va ।
Vaikuntham samava 'pnoti vishnuna saha modate ॥

Even a wicked man who has committed heinous sin to *Vaikuntha* and enjoys the bliss of communion with \ if he loves to hear the meaning of the Gita.

गीतार्थं ध्यायते नित्यं कृत्वा कर्माणि भूरिशः ।
जीवन्मुक्तः स विज्ञेयो देहान्ते परमं पदम् ॥

Gita 'rtham dhyayate nityam kritva karmani bhurisah ।
Jivan muktah sa vijneyo dehante paramam padam ॥

While performing his duties in daily life, he who meditates on the meaning of the Gita shall be regarded as a *Jivanmukta* He attains the supreme state when the body falls.

गीतामाश्रित्य बहवो भूभुजो जनकादयः ।
निर्धूतकल्मषा लोके गीता याताः परं पदम् ॥ २०

Gitamasritya bahavo bhubhujo Janakadayah ।
Nirdhuta kalmasha loke gita yatah param padam ॥

Many kings like Janaka became free from evil and attained the highest state by following the Gita.

गीतायाः पठनं कृत्वा माहात्म्यं नैव यः पठेत् ।
वृथा पाठो भवेत्तस्य श्रम एव ह्युदाहृतः ॥ २१

Gitayah pathanam kritva mahatmyam naiva yah pathet ।
Vritha patho bhavet tasya srama eva hyudahritah ॥

He who does not read the greatness of the Gita after having completed the reading of the Gita, his reading is in vain and his effort is wasted.

एतन्माहात्म्यसंयुक्तं गीताभ्यासं करोति यः ।
स तत्फलमवाप्नोति दुर्लभां गतिमाप्नुयात् ॥ २२

Etan mahatmya samyuktam
Gita 'bhyasam karoti yah ।
Sa tat phalam avapnoti durlabham
Gatimapnuyat ॥

He who studies the Gita together with this discourse on the greatness of the Gita, gets the fruit stated herein and reaches that goal which is difficult to attain.

सूत उवाच

माहात्म्यमेतद्गीताया मया प्रोक्तं सनातनम् ।
गीतान्ते च पठेद्यस्तु यदुक्तं तत्फलं लभेत् ॥ २३

Suta uvacha
Mahatmyametad gitaya maya proktam sanatanam ।
Gita 'nte cha pathedyastu yaduktam tat phalam labhet ॥

Suta Said :

He who after reading the Gita reads this eternal greatness of the Gita, declared by me will attain the fruit stated herein.

इति श्री वराहपुराणे श्री गीतामाहात्म्यं संपूर्णम् ।

Iti sri varaha purane sri Gitamahtmyam sampurnam.

In the Varahapurana this concludes the discourse entitled –

THE GREATNESS OF THE GITA.

INTRODUCTION

There is no book in world-literature so full of meaning and significance for mankind as the Gita. All other literature is man's creation. The Gita is the word of God. What compa-rision can there be between the work of man deluded by Maya and the work of God who is the ruler of Maya ? The speaker of the Gita is divine Incarnation, and the hearer is the very em-bodiment of all good qualities. The Master is *Paramatma*, and the disciple is a *Mahatma*. The teacher is the Supreme *Purusha* and the taught is the best of men. Thus from the interaction of a master and disciple of wonderful power, the Gita takes its origin. It is the blessed fruit of the *Tapasya* of man and God, of Nara and Narayana. It is the product of the intimate con-tact of thought between Lord Krishna and warrior Arjuna. The world-famous sage-poet Veda Vyasa, out of infinite compassion for suffering humanity, rendered into rhyme this spiritual con-versation between the Lord and his chosen devotee, and offered it to the world. So by the grace of this Trinity—the Lord, his Devotee, and the Sage—the Gita has come into the world for the spiritual benefit of mankind.

Whoever is fortunate could take shelter with the Gita and cross the endless stream of *Samsara*. In fact, it is only when the good done by mankind ripens and comes to fruition that a wonderful book like the Gita comes into the world. The uncommon genius behind the work, its limitless power, and its miraculous character, will naturally inspire any reader with devotion and attention to the great book. Therefore it is our duty to know something about its origin, its form and nature and the mystic power that is revealed through every word and phrase of the Divine utterance.

THE TWO MELODIES

Lord Krishna enchanted the world with two divine melodies during his life-time. The first is the magic harmony of his flute, and the second is the celestial song of the Gita

The milk-maids of Brindavan (Gopikas) drank deep the music of his flute, and others too have had a taste of i acquired merit in their lives. But we of this *Yuga* do no the possibility of knowing the raptures felt by the simple when they heard the music of his flute But this nee dishearten us in any way. The loss is more than compen for, we today can hear the mighty spiritual harmonies c Gita. The singer and the song cannot be separated; a Lord Krishna and the Gita are one, they are inseparabl The Gita is the breath of the Lord, nay, it is the very he the Lord. Those who are fortunate enough to take a b the holy stream of the Gita are immediately freed from al and liberation is like a ready fruit in the palm of their h What wonderful good fortune it is for millions and millic people all over the world—past, present, and future—to be to hear and understand the music of the Gita and feel its c ecstasy !

A MIRACLE OF UNIVERSAL BENEFIT

Many were the miracles performed by Lord Kr during the period of his *Avatara*. Some of his contempor witnessed them directly with awe and wonder. We have seen them. But what of it ? The greatest of the Lord's mir is before us – The Gita. It is not a sudden and temporary mi limited by time and place. It is not intended to delight particular set of people. The Gita is the eternal miracl universal significance for men of all nations and races, of religions and creeds, of all temperaments and condition human existence. Truth, beauty, and peace find their ultir expression in the Gita — the word of God. So we find in prayer to Lord Krishna—

"Salutations to Sri Krishna, who, playing the rol a charioteer to Arjuna, gave the nectar of the Gita for benefit of all beings in all the three worlds".

GITA—THE ESSENCE OF ALL SASTRAS

The literature of Hindu *Dharma* is vast and extens Various are the *Sastras*, the doctrines and creeds, and

commentaries expounding them. Baffled by the vastness of this literature, the common man naturally asks the question— "Is there anything that has churned the boundless ocean of the *Sastras* and embodied their very essence? Can I get a book which presents a synthetic view of all these *Sastras*? Is there any unique and authentic book which preserves not only the Hindu *Dharma* but also the doctrines, traditions, and conventions of all religions?" The answer emphatically is—"Yes, there is such a book, and such a book is the Gita." It is an encyclopaedia of spiritual wisdom and *Dharma*, because in it are brought together the main principles not only of Hindu religion but of all other religions also. It is the mighty tree of *Dharma*, ever expanding with branches and sub-branches of various sects and creeds. It is the central region where all religions are brought into unity. We find in the Gita a convincing harmonisation of *Sankhya*, *Nyaya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mimamsa* and Vedantic doctrines on the one hand, and of Sakta, Saiva, Ganapatya and Vaishnava cults on the other. In brief whatever is thought of by man in any religion and *Dharma* finds its proper place in this wonderful book, which is therefore acclaimed as the universal Scripture, the universal Gospel or the Bible of humanity.

A devotee of Vallabhacharya once asked the master what he considered the greatest *Sastra*. The master replied without any hesitation—

"There is only one *Sastra*, and that is the Gita of Lord Krishna." Again, replying to a disciple's question as to what he should sing, Sankaracharya said—

"Sing the Gita and the one thousand names of the Lord." Thus two giants of intellect and spirituality recommended the Gita, because they realised its invincible power. In the Skanda Purana, it is said —

"The Gita embodies all the *Sastras*" Again in the Mahabharata it is stated

"One must sing th Gita well; why think of other *Sastras*?" Thus in one voice the greatness of the Gita is proclaimed by the sages and the Puranas

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, one thousand years ago the message of the Gita came from the Lord. The lapse of time has not in any way affected its life-force. It flows ever fresh and pure like a mighty river. The sublime thoughts of the Gita, the way it reconciles different religious faiths, the fathomless wisdom embedded in it, the endless interpretations drawn from every word and syllable of its composition, - all these give every reader the feeling that it is not the work of mere human intellect, and understanding. There is no exaggeration if we say that from the beginning of creation no book so beneficial to mankind has appeared. Whenever any great man came into the world, he first paid homage to the Gita, and fulfilled his life's purpose by writing a commentary on it. From all this, we can understand the tremendous influence that the Gita is constantly exerting on the thought of man and his way of life.

THE VARIOUS GITAS–AND THE PLACE OF BHAGAVADGITA AMONG THEM

There are innumerable works in world literature that bear the name Gita as a suffix, like Ashtavakragita, Avadhutagita, Ribhugita, Brahmagita, Vasishtagita, Hanumadgita, Parasaragita, Sivagita, Hamsagita, Bikshugita, Kapilagita, Devigita, and so on But it is significant to note that the title of Gita is applied to Bhagavadgita only and to no other work. According to common usage, since Krishna uttered the Gita, it should have been called Krishna Gita. But the title for this wonderfull work is not Krishnagita, but Bhagavadgita. It is not the utterance of a sage or saint, poet or philosopher, or even any divine incarnation, but it is the veritable utterance of God Himself. The title is justified by its universality and its freedom from narrow limits of sects and creeds Therefore great western thinkers like Maxmuller, Carlyle, Edwin Arnold, Annie Besant and others felt its magnetic power, studied it, reformed their lives according to its teaching, and popularised the work in the world. Edwin Arnold rendered it into English poetry under the beautiful title "The Song Celestial". Such tributes inspire reverence for the work The Gita is translated into many languages all

over the world, and millions of people are thus enabled to fill their life with peace and bliss by drinking deep the pure waters of spiritual knowledge that flow from the book

GITA - THE MOTHER

In fact, the Gita is not merely a book in the ordinary sense of the word. Gita is the Mother The living spirit of a mother's heart breathes through it. When Lord Krishna dispensed with his *Avatara,* he left the Gita behind for the benefit of mankind. Ever since, Gita is conferring the blessing of wisdom and removing the sorrows of mankind. In this connection, the words of Mahatma Gandhi are memorable— "I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago, but this eternal mother (Gita) has completely filled her place by my side ever since. When I am in difficulty or distress I seek refuge in her bosom." Like Mahatma Gandhi several others took refuge in her bosom and overcame their difficulties. As the universal Mother· the Gita makes no distinction among her children. She welcomes all to her bosom, — the high-born and the casteless lowly, women and children, animals and birds, nay, the entire creation, — gives them protection, and leads them on the path of liberation. She declares with her majestic voice that liberation is the birthright of all humanity without distinction of race and religion, colour and nationality, age and sex.

THE INCOMPARABLE POWER OF THE GITA

Gita is a Kalpavriksha, but unlike that in Paradise, it does not give temporary worldly goods; its gift is the bliss of liberation when all desires cease. Gita is a Kamadhenu, but unlike that in Heaven, it does not bestow perishable things of pleasure; its gift is the pure and perfect joy of the spirit. Gita is a Chintamani, but unlike that in Heaven, it does not yield earthly prosperity; it removes all troubles and tribulations and leads the bound souls to the ultimate reality where there is no more sorrow or delusion. Gita is nectar, but it is not the insentient liquid that the Gods are supposed to drink. It is the nectar of knowledge that releases man from the cycle of birth and death, and gives him direct realisation of the Supreme Self.

Fearlessness is its principal doctrine, for it instils faith in every man by repeatedly telling him — "You are not the body, you are the imperishable *Atman*". It is the divine voice that teaches the secret of action, free from attachment to results, and thereby declares that all people are qualified for the glory of liberation.

It is a strongly built boat that enables man to cross the ocean of *Samsara* easily. It is the charioteer that drives life's chariot smoothly over the perilous road of the world. It is the thunder peal of knowledge that wakes up man from the sleep of delusion. The cowherd of Brindavan, Sri Krishna, milked the cows, namely the Upanishads, and sage Veda Vyasa, happily for us, preserved the stream of nectar in the magnificent vial of Mahabharata. It is the divine vision that harmonises the highest philosophy with everyday practical life· It falls like gentle rain and cools the heat-oppressed brain, scalded by the threefold sulphurous fire. It frees mankind from the snares of delusion created by atheists and agnostics, and lifts them up like an aeroplane to fly freely in the sky of truth. It is a faithful guide that warns us against the pitfalls of external allurements and temptations, and leads us on the right path. Ignorance causes delusion, and delusion causes an irresistible attraction for the sensual pleasures of the world The Gita dispels ignorance and delusion all at once, and places the key to liberation directly in our hands. Thus the Gita is essentially the highest *Brahma Vidya*.

THE REASON FOR THE BOUNDLESS POWER OF THE GITA

We shall now understand the reason for the boundless power of the Gita. When Suka taught king Parikshit the path of liberation, the sage had full seven days time to convey his teaching. So he could expound his philosophy with delightful stories, illustrations, and beautiful descriptions· But the position of Lord Krishna when he delivered his message was entirely different The Lord had only a few minutes time to teach the highest knowledge. Besides, it was a battlefield. Conches

were blown, drums sounded, and in a moment, arrows would issue forth from the assembled heroes and warriors. It was in the midst of this uproar that Lord Krishna had to shoulder the tremendous responsibility of teaching the highest wisdom to Arjuna. Before the seated warrior could rise up, the Lord had to work the miracle of a total spiritual transformation in his devotee's heart. Naturally therefore, in order to meet the crisis, Lord Krishna pulled together and brought into one focal point the mystic powers he possessed as the Supreme *Purusha*. He distilled all the wisdom of the Vedas and Vedanta into his teaching. He taught everything found in the *Sastras* and the different methods of spiritual practice. As a result, the Lord's purpose was completely fulfilled. The same Arjuna who in the beginning wailed in despair, "I will not fight" speaks resolutely at the end, "I will carry out your word." He declares triumphantly, "My delusion is destroyed."

It is the transcendental genius of Lord Krishna that worked the miracle. It is the illumination of knowledge arising out of the intense concentration and ecstasy of the Lord that worked on the devotee's mind, and brought about the change of vision. Even ordinary mortals, when they get into a state of concentration, are able to perform difficult things in literature, politics, science, religion and other worldly activities. This being so, is it any wonder that the all-knowing Bhagavan, by concentrating his powers, could achieve the highest aim in the shortest time and under the most difficult circumstances ?

This idea is supported by one incident in the Aswamedha-parva of Mahabharata. Yudhishtira was installed king, and he ruled the kingdom peacefully and prosperously. Lord Krishna wished to return to Dwaraka. At that time, Arjuna approached him and said, "The message you gave me on the battlefield has slipped out of my mind. I am eager to hear it again. Deign to instruct me in the divine knowledge which out of compassion you taught me then." Lord Krishna replied, I have taught you the most secret knowledge at that time. I am greatly displeased that you have forgotten it out of neglect and indifference. It is beyond me to repeat it fully now. On the

battlefield when I spoke to you I was in a state of ecstati concentration. It is not possible now."

From this we understand that the Gita was the outcom of the deep meditative ecstasy of the Lord of Yoga. Hence it' infinite power.

GITA - A SACRIFICE

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, a wonderful sacrific was performed. The face of Arjuna was the consecrated fire The message of the Gita was the sacred oblation. Lord Krishn was the High-priest, and the fruit of sacrifice was liberatio *(Moksha)*.

Lord Krishna distilled the very essence of Mahabharat into the Gita and offered it to Arjuna, and the life's purpose o the devotee was thus fulfilled. The Gita is open to all. Ma generations of people reach the goal of life through it !

GITA - THE ESSENCE OF THE UPANISHADS

The Upanishads are the essence of the Vedas, and th Gita is the essence of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are know as *Vedanta Sastra*, because they reveal the highest truths o Vedic literature. They are also known as the Crown (head of the Vedas, as they comprise the most important aspect of th Vedas, in the same way as the head is the most importan organ of the human body. The Upanishads occupy the centra place in spiritual literature. It is natural that earnest seeker should wish to study and understand the Upanishads which ar the finest fruits of the mighty Vedic tree. But the language an thought of the Upanishads are not easy for the common man t understand. How can they appreciate their sweet music ? Ho can they understand and experience the knowledge inculcate through them? This was a difficult problem. The Lord se himself the task of solving it, and thereby did the greates service to humanity. The Upanishads are the Cows, Arjuna i the Calf, Lord Krishna himself is the milkman, and thus h milked the supreme knowledge of Self from the Upanishads an distributed it to all seekers after truth. The Gita is the mil drawn from the Upanishads.

Thus the Vedic knowledge is made available to the common man through the easy literature of the Gita. Generally people think that Gita is taught to Arjuna. The fact is that it is taught to all mankind. After all the share of milk that goes to the Calf is very little. The rest is for others. All pure-souls seeking for liberation share the wisdom of Gita alike. The Gita is not the mythical drink of the Gods but the spiritual nectar of absolute *Sachidananda*. Easy in style, sublime in style, sublime in thought, the Gita as the essence of the Upanishads, is offered to us by the Lord Himself. It is therefore the duty of every one to read, understand, and practise the teaching of the Gita and transcend the ills and sorrows of earthly life.

WISDOM OF THE GITA—INFINITE

As we try to estimate the miraculous power of the Gita, we find it infinite. Just as God is infinity, even so His word is infinite in its suggestiveness and significance Lord Krishna is God Himself, and so his words are God's own utterance. The Gita of Lord Krishna is therefore in a real sense Bhagavadgita. Any reader would be struck with its divine quality. Divinity sparkles through every word and verse. Newer and newer meanings are released as we read it often and often. It is no exaggeration to say that each word contains a whole flood of knowledge and wisdom. The Gita yields its meaning to each man according to his previous thoughts and experiences. As the mind is purified, it progressively reveals its universality. "The suggestiveness of this wonderful book is really infinite." Although several people have drawn out its meaning through notes and commentaries, yet infinite wisdom remains unrevealed in it. When a mighty river is flowing, each man, according to his capacity, draws its water for his use—the vessel to collect the water being large or small, a glass, a bucket or a tank, as the case may be. Inspite of the water thus taken out, the river still flows on as an immeasurable flood Even so, the best of men in intellect and spiritual wisdom, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Srikanta, have collected the spiritual knowledge of the Gita through the large vessels of their purified minds. In modern times, Tilak, Gandhi, Annie Besant, and

others drew their share of knowledge from the book. Several others are engaged in the work, and in future many more will do so. In this way, many have churned the Gita and interpreted its meaning in different ways. Some have spoken of it as the doctrine of *Advaita*, others of dualism, yet others as Karma-yoga, Bhaktiyoga, Rajayoga, and the knowledge of the Supreme Being, and so on. Notwithstanding all these interpretations and commentaries, a whole treasure of knowledge still lies in the unfathomable depths of the work.

This is its uniqueness. No other work has such potentiality. Therefore it is said that there is only one person who could understand its meaning in its entirety, and that person is no other than the Lord Himself. The others could understand only parts of its infinite wisdom.

"Lord Krishna alone knew the complete wisdom of the Gita. Arjuna, Vyasa, Suka and Janaka understood only a bit of it."

However one must understand a simple truth here Whether a man takes a single drop of nectar or a whole jugful of it, the effect is the same. Immortality is assured for all of them without exception. So, without being disheartened that one is not so intelligent and spiritually evolved as the great masters, each one should try to understand one of its great teachings and practise it in his life Thus he would attain supreme peace.

GITA—THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF MAHABHARATA

The Bhagavadgita comprises eighteen chapters—(from chapter twenty five to chapter forty two in the Bhishma Parva of Mahabharata.) In the vast ocean of that stupendous epic, the Gita shines like a light-house. It is the cream of the epic Veda Vyasa composed it after mastering the eighteen *Puranas*, the nine *Vyakaranas*, and the four *Vedas*.

The epic is known as the fifth Veda. The Gita is the essence of that great work. Figuritively, as Lord Krishna

showered the nectar of knowledge, Vyasa collected it in the magnificent vial of the Mahabharata.

"Of the four ends of life—righteousness, wealth, fulfilment of desire, and final liberation--what is found in the Bharata is found elsewhere, and what is not in it is not found any where." Again it is said, "That which is not in Mahabharata will not be found in the country of Bharata." From this, one can imagine the greatness of the Gita, as the essence of Mahabharata. Sankara says at the beginning of his commentary that the Gita is the epitomised essence of all Vedic knowledge Otherwise why should scholars all over the world be drawn to it? Where there is no honey, the bees are not there. The teaching of the Gita is deathless. Changes of time and clime do not affect it. It remains intact and entire. Its *Dharma* applies to all cycles of time. So the teacher of the Gita says in the third chapter that he taught the deathless wisdom to the Sun.

And also it is the deepest and the most secret wisdom. Otherwise why should the Gitacharya say that he is teaching the most secret knowledge? Thus the fundamental philosophy of the Gita is applicable to all times and countries, all religions and creeds. It is a narrow view to think of the Gita as a book of a particular religion. Those who take refuge in it would understand what righteousness is, and quickly attain peace.

Let us hear what Jnaneswara says of the Gita—"The Gita is a garden where plants of discrimination abound; the basis of all enjoyments: the mine of transcendental knowledge; the ocean filled with the nine *Rasas*: open gateway to the highest heaven; the mother of all sciences; the birthplace of different types of knowledge; the treasury af literary jewels; the Ganges flooded with the nectar of knowledge; the Goddess Lakshmi rising from the milky sea of discrimination" Such devoted praise from highly spiritual men declare the greatness of the Gita.

GITA - UPANISHAD

We shall now consider some more striking aspects of the Gita. The *Sastras* say that Brahma rose from the navel-lotus

of Lord Vishnu and that Brahma gave the Vedas to the world. On the other hand, the Gita proceeded directly from the face-lotus of the Lord Himself. Which is nearer—the navel-lotus or the face-lotus? So it is clear that the Gita occupies a place nearer to the Lord than the Vedas The same idea is expressed in Mahabharata thus—

"One must sing the Gita well. Why bother about other *Sastras*? The Gita proceeded directly from the face-lotus of the Lord Himself." What more evidence do we need to establish the greatness of the Gita? Some people compare the Gita to *Smriti*. Vallabhacharya rejected the proposition by questioning that if the Vedas are the breath of the Lord, Gita which is the word of God, should be given a higher place. Moreover at the end of every chapter of the Gita, we find the declaration—"in the Upanishad of *Brahmavidya*." Therefore it is evident that the Gita ranks high among the Upanishads. There is nothing wrong to name it as the Gita—Upanishad. Like the Vedas, the Gita is undoubtedly the word of God.

GITA—IN THE PRASTHANATRAYA

The ten Upanishads, the Bhagavadgita, and the Brahmasutras constitute what is known as the *Prasthanatraya*, without an understanding of the *Prasthanatraya*, it is impossible to attain spiritual realisation. So, for those who seek for liberation, the *Prasthanatraya* is the greatest support. As the Gita contains all the subtle principles of *Dharma*, it has acquired an important place for itself in the *Prasthanatraya*. The sublime and subtle thoughts of the Upanishads and the Brahmasutras are expressed in easily understandable style and diction in the Gita, which explains its great popularity among all sections of people. In the Gitamahatmya, Lord Vishnu declares,

"The Gita is my shelter and refuge; it is a beautiful home for me; with its knowledge I rule the three worlds." These words declare emphatically the sublimity of the Gita and its importance for the common man. If the Lord rules the three worlds with its knowledge, will it not help the common man to rule a small household with its powerful wisdom? It can. Kings like Janaka

were able to rule kingdoms in the spirit of the Gita. All those who followed the teaching of the Gita were able to rule kingdoms in the spirit of the Gita. All those who followed the Gita teaching were able to maintain their families free from fear, and direct the ship of life safely through stormy accidents, disasters, and calamities. Therefore the common man who is caught in the world's wilderness, and the fire of difficulties should always take the help of the Gita for his own peace and happiness.

"The Gita protects those who protect it." That is, those who revere the Gita, seek refuge in it, and practise its teaching are rescued from the ocean of *Samsara*. The *Sastras* exhort—"He who desires to cross the terrible ocean of *Samsara* can do so easily with the help of the Gita-ship."

REMEDY TO THE EVILS OF KALIYUGA

Perhaps because *Dharma* in the *Kaliyuga* walks lame with only one of her four feet, or perhaps because *Kali* would exert the greatest evil influence to make all mankind fallen souls, the Supreme Lord incarnated Himself as Krishna and offered the Gita as protection for mankind just before the beginning of the *Kaliyuga*. Otherwise, why did He not think of this in the *Kritayuga*, or in the *Tretayuga*? Why did he wait till the end of *Dwaparayuga*? Evidently, He knew that a strong medicine acts powerfully when the disease is serious. Whatever it is, the people of the *Kaliyuga* have no fear now. Just as for the *Mantrik* there is no fear from malefic planets or evil spirits, the man who repeats the *Gita-mantra* has no fear of and is immune from the difficulties and dangers of worldly life. If, for any reason, they do come, they are destroyed at once. In the Padmapurana, the greatness of the Gita is described as follows,—

"The mere recitation of the Gita defeats and silences the horried cries of the legions of Death." It is no exaggeration to say that every word of the Gita is like fire that burns all sin. Therefore from the learned pundits to the illiterate from the king to the beggar, all mankind take shelter with the Gita and enjoy the blessings of life. By drinking the holy waters of the

Gita, many attained and are even now attaining perfection and freedom. Sankara asserts,—"A little study of the Gita, a sip of the holy Ganges water, worship of Vishnu even once, is enough to drive away the Lord of Death." So one should take the pledge to follow the truths of the Gita with faith, and experience supreme bliss even in this life.

THE GITA—AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The Gita is not merely a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. It is the process of thought in the heart of every individual. Like Arjuna, if anybody listens carefully to the Lord, His divine voice would be audible to him. One should not keep away Gita after reading it once. It is not like a novel to peruse it once and throw it away. The Gita is constantly in contact with life. People should study it regularly, and continue to practise the laws proclaimed in it from day to day. In the disasters and calamities of earthly life, the Gita offers indomitable support. Just as the sick man is fearless when an expert physician is by the side, just as a seeker after truth beset by doubts feels joyful when he has by his side an experienced teacher to guide him, even so, the individual human being tortured by the sorrows of earthly life, acquires courage and power from the Gita

The following words of Mahatma Gandhi recording his personal experience of adherence to the laws of the Gita, would be highly encouraging to all. "When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to Bhagavadgita and find a verse to comfort me and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they had not left any visible and indelible effect on me I owe it to the teachings of Bhagavadgita." That is why the elders have instituted the study of the Gita as a daily recitation. By such constant study and meditation of the Gita, mundane life is transformed into divine life. Thus the demon evolves into man and man evolves into a Mahatma Such is the extraordinary power of the Gita. People are for-ever indebted to Krishna, Arjuna and Vedavyasa for having conferred the blessing of Gita on mankind.

THE REMOVAL OF SORROW AND THE ATTAINMENT OF BLISS-THE AIM OF THE GITA

Gita means that which is sung; and song is generally inspired in times of joy and not in times of sorrow So the seeker should remember that the ultimate goal of the Gita is bliss. Its purpose is to show the path to a state of unconditioned bliss. Through the eighteen chapters, the Gita reveals to the individual being the different paths leading up to unbroken bliss. So it is that the Gita starts with the word—"*Asochyan*" (those for whom no sorrow need be) and ends with "*masuchah*" (do not grieve) The denial of sorrow and the attainment of joy—these are the two great fruits of the Gita to mankind tormented by the fierce fire of earthly life. The grieving soul is comforted. The troubled man is inspired with courage. The man in despair is instilled with enthusiasm. Thus many people approach the Gita, the mother, and derive a wonderful change of heart.

So far we have touched upon some external aspects of the Gita. We shall now go deeper into the work and examine its beauty. But before we do so we have to consider the circumstances of the birth of the Gita, and its antecedents. The Gita is not fiction. It is a historical fact. Lord Krishna, Arjuna, and others are not imaginary characters, but real men who lived in Bharath (India) in the past. As we realise this fact, our faith in the Gita would be redoubled.

THE BIRTH OF THE GITA

When the Pandavas and the Kauravas were living together in peace and harmony, the germ of jealousy entered the heart of Duryodhana and gradually robbed him of his discrimination. Consequently, with the wrong lead given by Sakuni and others, he defeated the Pandavas in the game of dice and won the whole kingdom for himself. The Pandavas were banished on the condition that they should live in the forest for twelve years, and remain unidentified for one year. The Pandavas fulfilled the conditions of their defeat, and after thirteen years, claimed their share of the kingdom. But Duryodhana refused to give even an inch of territory, much less five small villages for the five princes. The Pandavas were offended by the pride and

greed of their cousins, and had no alternative but to undertake a righteous war to secure their due share of the kingdom. The armies of both sides assembled on the battlefield of Kurukshetra known as *Dharmakshetra*—the field of righteousness. The battle was about to begin. Arjuna, the chief hero of the Pandava hosts, asked his charioteer Lord Krishna to drive forward and stop the chariot in the midst of the two armies. Then Arjuna surveyed the enemy formations and saw before him his own grandfathers, teachers, cousins, friends, and other relations. In a moment, he visualised the horror of a terrible war in which he had to defy and destroy so many of his own kith and kin. His mind was confused and perplexed with doubt and he sank into the slough of despondency. "How can I kill my own people? Is it not a sin ? Better it is to become a mendicant and live on alms, than to kill my own relations and friends, and become a king." So his mind wandered away from the set purpose with which he came to the battlefield. His resolution deserted him. He became weak and pathetic. He perspired all over the body, his hands trembled, and the great bow *Gandiva* slipped out of his grip. Down he fell on the ground at the feet of the Lord, and implored him to enlighten him as to what is *Dharma* and what his duty is, under those critical circumstances.

"I am your disciple. I surrender to you. Command me as to what my duty is in this crisis—With these words he surrendered to the Lord and implored for his guidance. Then was the message of the Gita delivered by Lord Krishna. With the thoughts of 'I' and 'mine', *Moha* (ignorance) overpowered Arjuna, and deprived him of the power to carry out his duty. The whole teaching of the Gita is a thunderstroke on man's ignorance and delusion, which is nothing but identifying the Self with the body. It is the cause of Arjuna's poverty of spirit at a time when his duty demanded resolute action. The Lord's spiritual illumination shattered his devotee's delusion into fragments, and in the end the disciple triumphantly declares, "Delusion is destroyed, I will do as you command".

The Gita that dispelled the ignorance of Arjuna can dispel the ignorance of any one. The Gita that removed the sorrow of Arjuna can remove the sorrow of any one. The medicine

:hat cures a particular disease of any one can cure such disease n all people. It is true that, Arjuna as the medium, Lord Krishna was offering his divine message to mankind. So it behoves every one sincerely to examine his own heart and mind, and in the light of the Lord's supreme wisdom, to destroy the delusions of lust and greed accumulated through innumerable births. Supreme Self-realisation is the concept of the Gita. May humanity attain bliss through Self-Knowledge.

WHO IS QUALIFIED FOR GITA-STUDY ?

The question who is qualified to study Gita is often discussed. Who drinks water?—the man who is thirsty. Who eats food?—the man who is hungry. Who takes medicine?—the man who is sick. Therefore all those who are victims of the disease of mortal life are qualified for the study of the Gita; and all those who are born are subject to this disease. Those who suffer pain and grief are victims of the disease of life's bondage. All those who are born and therefore should die are subject to the disease of earthly life. It follows that all mankind without distinction of caste, creed, and age are qualified for the study of the Gita and the acquisition of its knowledge. But the principal point is, that man alone who is aware of his disease seeks for medicine, and the effectiveness of the medicine depends upon his faith in the physician and the medicine prescribed by him. Even so, he who is conscious of his bondage and the infinite ills of earthly life, will undertake the study of great books like the Gita. And also, only those who have undisturbed faith in the *Sastras* and the holy men who teach them, derive benefit from their study. For others, the study is only a pastime and is futile. So Lord Krishna determines the quality of the man competent to study the Gita in the following words—

"O Arjuna! the Gita should not be taught to those who do not seek for liberation from the cycle of birth and death, to those who do not have devotion to God and *Guru*, to those who do not serve the teacher, and to those who speak ill of Me (God)." The Gita is prohibited for such men only.

In another place, the Lord again says— "Those who have faith in the teaching of the Gita, and practice it without evil and

hatred, are soon freed from the effects of *Karma*. On the other hand, those who hate the teaching of the Gita and do not practise it, are doomed to death through their ignorance." Therefore faith and devotion are the only qualifications for the study of the Gita. It should be noted that Lord Krishna uses the general term "*manavah*" 'people' because he wants to emphasise the truth that all people irrespective of their race and religion are competent to undertake the study and understanding of the Gita.

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

The Lord is interested more in emphasising practice than in expounding the principles of philosophy. So he disposes off the object of attainment, *Paramatman*, with a few well-defined principles, and elaborates at length the means and methods for reaching the goal. The determining features of the man of stead-fast wisdom in the second chapter, the method of *yogic* practice in the sixth chapter, the qualities of a devotee in the twelfth chapter, the characteristics of spiritual knowledge in the thirteenth chapter; the attributes of divine nature—these are illustrations of the method of teaching adopted in the Gita. It is made clear to us that the continuous practice of the prescribed methods is more important than the mere exposition of religious doctrines. In every page of the Gita we discover this emphasis on practice. No man whose moral life is blemished by lust and greed can hope to receive spiritual illumination. Knowledge is impossible for one whose mind is impure. Can corn grow on a withered heath ? So ethical training for the purification of the mind is the first and the most essential thing in spiritual life. Knowing this, the teacher of the Gita lays special emphasis on character-building.

If the love for the Supreme Being should induce the person to take to some form of spiritual practice, the goal becomes manifest in a short time. But unfortunately, people are constantly talking of the goal without attempting to move forward towards it. Man can attain salvation only when his mind becomes absolutely pure. Otherwise the vast gulf between the individual soul and the Supreme Self remains as it is for ever.

"Mind becoming as pure as *Paratman* is liberation" says Patanjali. Therefore the seeker should undertake the ways and means to purify the mind. People think more of the object of attainment and less of the methods of attaining the object. They are carried away by philosophical doctrines and lose sight of the path leading to their realisation They glorify the ideal but neglect the attempt to reach it. The tendency to dwell too much and too long on the abstract truths of religion is the greatest obstacle and temptation to the seeker. Therfore the teacher of the Gita concentrates attention on the means and methods leading to the goal. He speaks briefly about what is to be known and enlarges the path of knowledge. He speaks briefly about the object of meditation and explains at length the process of meditation. This is the fundamental teaching which the seeker should understand at the very beginning of his study of the Gita. Let all people remember that the Gita is the practical science of religion.

GITA ELEVATES WORLDLY ACTIVITY TO THE LEVEL OF VEDANTA

"A life of activity is not wrong; It is not an obstacle to spiritual progress; Purify your mind, then your work becomes a holy sacrifice. Purify your feeling, then shall earthly life become an aid to spiritual realisation."— This is the truth the Gita proclaims to the world. Man cannot live without activity even for a second. So it is useless to condemn the activities of man in the world and teach renunciation of action. The common man cannot understand it. If inaction is to be equated with realisation, then walls and stumps of trees would be the greatest philosophers, for they do not act. Ninety per cent of the people are either house-holders or bachelors. The *Sanyasins* who have renounced everything, who lead a solitary life, and who remain in a state of absolute absorption in the divine are very very few. What we need is that type of teaching which is useful for the largest majority of people. Having considered the nature of mankind and worldly life, the teacher of the Gita, instead of condemning worldly activity, has set about to find the way to ublimate action and purify it from its worldly taint. And he declares openly that man can gradually progress towards self-realisation through purified action.

"Worshipping me through their prescribed duties, men attain liberation."—So says Lord Krishna. Arjuna is himself the most shining example of this truth Deluded by *Maya*, he declined to fight. A feeling of false renunciation overpowered him. He said he would beg for his food, and live on alms in some nook or corner, and so spend his life.

Lord Krishna could easily see through the delusion that clouded the mind of his devotee. He dispelled the ignorance with his divine knowledge, and Arjuna sprang into the field of battle with all the power and glory of a warrior, and transformed the battle into a holy sacrifice by declaring "I am not the doer." With the Lord constantly before his eyes he fought the battle. Indeed, the rememberance of the Lord in the midst of all worldly activity is the direct road to final liberation for all people.

"Remember me and fight." This is the open secret of action. To fight is not in itself great. To remember the Lord and fight is indeed great. To surrender the fruit of action, and do the work prescribed by duty is the sublimation of work into worship. Work is transformed into worship by the fruits of action being dedicated to God. Then, the man engaged in a thousand activities of the world will attain the same goal as the *yogi* who remains still and silent in the ecstasy of divine contemplation. Both will attain peace that surpasses understanding. This is the main teaching of the Gita. Some of the *Sastras* emphasise the withdrawl from the world of action, and some other *Sastras* teach exactly the opposite. In both cases there is an over-emphasis on action or the negation of action. But the Gita has discovered a via-media, a middle path that reconciles action and the renunciation of action. All people can follow the path. "Though your hands are in society, keep your mind calm in solitude." This the Gita teaches. Following this principle, king Janaka ruled a kingdom; Lord Vishnu is ruling the three worlds by the same wisdom.

Thus Lord Krishna elevated action as the main path of *yoga* to spiritual realisation. Narrow-minded *Vedantins* condemn wordly activity and consider exclusion and isolation from society as the necessary condition of spiritual life. But

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THE HARMONY OF DIFFERENT PATHS OF YOGA IN THE GITA

Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Raja-yoga and Jnana-yoga—these four paths lead to the Supreme Being. Seekers choose that path which is best suited to their nature and temperament. Among these, not a few proclaim the importance of their own particular path, and try to establish its superiority by producing arguments in its favour. Not only do they glorify their own path but they go to the extent of condemning other paths as worthless and wretched. This has led to bitter controversies, violent denunciations, and mutual hatred among the followers of the different creeds. The Lord was quite aware of the danger of such futile controversies to establish the superiority of one path over another. Therefore he set himself the task of putting down these differences, and proclaiming once for all the equality and harmony of all the four paths of *yoga*. These four paths, as it were, are the four gateways to enter the mansion of liberation, and through whichever gateway one enters, he reaches the inner palace. Just as different rivers flowing through distant regions finally reach the ocean, even so, all the various paths of *yaga* lead man to the ultimate goal of Truth. All paths are good. There is no compulsion to follow this or that path Each man is perfectly free to choose that path which suits his character and temperament, and move forward towards the goal.

By nature, the mind of some people is inclined to action. Such men inevitably take to Karma-yoga. They find pleasure in activity, and delight in service to society. The Gita teaches them what action is, and how action should be one without attachment to the fruits thereof. The chapter entitled Karma-yoga is intended to guide men of action in the proper way, so that they might not blindly plunge into wordly activity and get themselves caught in the sequence of action and reaction. The

Gita teaches that action, without the feeling of personal doership and without attachment to the fruits thereof, is the secret of Karma-yoga.

Again, some people by nature are emotional. They have strong feelings of love and affection. Such men choose the path of devotion–Bhakti-yoga. They worship, they pray, they sing the name of the Lord in a hundred ways, and find inexpressible joy in the love for their chosen deity. The Gita exhorts them to rise higher and higher in their devotion, and come closer to their object of worship. This Bhakti-yoga is meant for such aspirants. A third category of men are meditative. They do not find pleasure in action, or in the flow of emotion. So they meditate *(Dhyana)* on the highest reality, by withdrawing their minds from the distracting influence of the sense-objects, and by turing it inwards to find out the very source and the ultimate origin of their being. Such inward exploration of the reality gives them great satisfaction. For such men the Gita explains the nature of *Dhyana* (meditation), and control of the senses and mind. This is Atma-samyama yoga in the Gita.

Apart from these three categories, there is a fourth category of aspirants, and they are *Jnanis*. They are rational in their outlook and attitude. They think, analyse, discriminate, and reject what is not real, and try to grasp the reality by a process of un-compromising reason. They discriminate between the real and the unreal, between matter and spirit, between the mind and that which knows the various transformations of the mind. It requires great will-power to hold on to this rational enquiry into the nature of Truth, without being side tracked or pulled out by the appetites of the body or the impulses of the mind. For these aspirants, the Gita teaches Kshetrakshetrajna-yoga which forms a separate chapter in the book.

In this way the Gita accepts the predispositions of different minds and encourages people to adopt the most suitable path for their progress. The Gita denies the superiority or inferiority of any form of practice and maintains a balance among the various creeds. Bitter controversies among different sects are due to ignorance, and Gita upholds the importance of every

yoga in its own proper place and for suitable aspirants. Swami Vivekananda asserts, "The reconciliation of different paths of *Dharma*, and work without desire are the two special characteristics of the Gita." As the Gita is universal in its message, leaders of different doctrines and creeds have all offered their homage to it. Sankara, the exponent of *Advaita*, Ramanuja of qualified monism, Madhava of dualism, Srikantha of Saiva-cult, have all praised the Gita unanimously. Thus the Gita explains one after another all the paths of union with the Supreme, and finally concludes that all paths leads to the same goal. The ultimate aim of all religions is to root out the ego and merge in the infinite. Contradictions and denunciation of principles other than one's own is detrimental to spiritual enlightenment. The Gita has done the greatest service to mankind by setting at rest all such foolish controversion, and by declaring the balance and harmony of all paths of *yoga*.

GITA AND UNIVERSAL LOVE

Gita is not mere talk, it is the practice of *Vedanta*. In the smallest details, it points towards the practical side of life. Without the ripening of heart, no realisation is possible. This is the basic creed of the Gita. If the mind is permeated with ignorance and disturbed by selfish desires, and is therefore hard and cruel, no amount of prayer, worship or meditation can bring liberation to the aspirant. It is only when the heart is filled with tenderness and love that devotion, knowledge, and meditation develop, and man makes progress towards the goal. But such devotion has no meaning when man appears to love God but hates his fellow beings. It is not service to God, but an offence to the Lord.

Any harm or offence done to man is an offence to God Himself, because all creatures constitute the limbs of God in his universal form. Any injury done to any limb affects the whole being. Therefore love for all is the essential ingredient of all forms of *yoga*. The Gita continuously from beginning to end emphasises this truth. Wherever there is an occasion the teacher refers to kindness and love for all creatures.

Thoughts of universal love are fo[...] part of the Gita. The word—*Sarvabhuta*—'all c[...] beings', [...] more

than human application. Love is universalised to include all non-human creatures like animals, birds, and plants, and so on. Why does Lord Krishna give such importance to universal love? Is it not enough to teach meditation, worship, or discrimination, or *yoga* ? Evidently it is not enough. These practices of *yoga*, however sincerely and efficiently they are practised cannot bear fruit, in the same way as good medicine alone cannot cure a disease without proper diet. Medicine and proper diet are both equally important. So love for all creatures is essential for realisation, along with the practice of *yoga*.

"He who does my work, who regards me as the supreme, who is devoted to me, who is free from attachment and desire, who has no hatred of any creature, he gains union with me." So says the Lord. Besides this, while describing the characteristic features of a devotee, he first mentions the princely quality of love for all creation—"*adveshta sarvabhutanam*" (i.e.) he who has no hatred of any creature in the universe. What is the secret behind this teaching of the Lord ? It is to say that universal love is the real fruit of all *yogas*, meditation, knowledge, action etc. To know that everything is the manifestation of the Lord, and to love all with that understanding is the highest realisation of the ultimate Truth. And then the practical side of *yoga* is impressed upon all aspirants, that universal love is the test of *Vedanta*. The aspiring soul has to shed all thoughts af ill-will and hatred against any creature. Everyday life affords innumerable opportunities for the practice of this golden virtue.

As man eliminates ill-thoughts and feelings, his practice of *yoga* in any form rapidly becomes perfect and he reaches the supreme state. Universal love alone can remove the mental conflict between the individual and the environment in which he is placed, and unless this conflict is removed, there can be no realisation of God. In the Bhagavata, Sudama prays to Lord Krishna for three virtues (1) worship of his lotus-feet (2 company of holy devotees, (3) overflowing an limitless love for all creatures. Of these three, the last gives vitality and power to the other virtues. Devotion and knowledge are illumined by universal love. When we come across any man of divine realisation, we invariably find in him a disinterested love for all creatures, and

a heart overflowing with love and compassion for suffering humanity. Lord Krishna therefore underlines the need for this basic quality for all aspirants, whatever might be the form of *yoga* they choose to follow.

GITA EQUANIMITY OF MIND

Another great teaching of the Gita is equanimity. It is only when the mind is calm and balanced that *Atman* becomes manifest. Just as the reflection of the Sun's orb is seen clearly when the water is pure and calm, even so, when the mind is calm and pure, *Atman* shines forth in its own splendour, and supreme bliss is then experienced. Therefore the Gita teaches equanimity and the means of attaining it. The aspirant should be constantly vigilent, and ceaselessly strive for calmness and balance of mind. Lord Krishna speaks quite clearly about *yoga*. He says *Samatwam yoga uchyate*. Equanimity of mind is *yoga*. There are several quotations to this effect in the Gita.

"O Arjuna! in pleasure and pain, in fame and shame, in heat and cold, in praise and abuse, in loss or gain, in success or defeat, keep an equal mind. The heroic soul who maintains such equanimity is alone qualified for liberation. He conquers the wiles and trials, the limitations and obstacles of Nature even in this life. He attains supreme bliss." In this way, the teacher of the Gita specially urges aspiring souls to cultivate equanimity, as the very breath of their life. We come across many people who think of liberation, but who do nothing to discipline the mind which is the main obstacle to self-realisation. The mind is like a monkey, unsteady, moody, perverse and foolish. The man with an untrained mind is subject to violent reactions resulting from the ups and downs of worldly life. He is elated by praise, and is depressed by criticism. He becomes cynical when things go wrong. He weeps and wails when pain or loss, or bereavement overtakes him in the usual course of human life. He is like the bucket used to draw water. It goes down into the deep well, and is pulled up to the top alternately. Such modifications of the mind make it impossible to grasp the truth, even if it is thought of a thousand times. The spiritual aim cannot be attained with such a weak and impure instrument.

So Lord Krishna exhorts every one to strive for purity and equanimity of mind in the midst of the most distressing conditions of human existence.

The whole universe is the manifestation of God. Here there is only one and not many. Ignorance creates the illusion of manifoldness. But it is not real. In the chapter on *Viswarupasandarsana*, the truth is made known to us that the Lord pervades the whole universe and is immanent in all that exists. The universal form of God cannot be taken up into fragments, like a piece of cloth. Therefore there should not be any ill-will or hatred against any living creature. We must look at all things with an equal eye. We should be equal minded towards friends and enemies. The Gita teaching goes beyond human love.

"Towards a learned and humble Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a pariah who eats dog's flesh, the man of knowledge has an equal attitude." Here is the greatness of the Gita. The Gita enfolds in its universal embrace of love all living creatures, men and animals together. "Oh, aspring soul, shower your love not only on man but on the demon also, not only on good-men but the wicked also, not only on human beings but on animals, birds, creeping reptiles, and worms also. As you love yourself, so love others. In joy and sorrow, consider the whole universe as your own, your own self"—This is the injunction of Lord Krishna.

Generally we speak of brother-hood among mankind as a great virtue. The elders say, "love others as your own brothers." But Gita rises a step higher. It transcends the idea of brotherhood and reaches the plane of identification of one's self with all. The Gita expounds this idea. In fact the idea of brother hood is insufficient as brothers may divide, dispute, and fight. But no one could hate his own self. Therefore identification of others with one's own self is the highest form of love. Few religions expound and preach this universality. It is the Upanishdas and the Gita that proclaim the truth.

Thus the Gita breaks through all barriers and limitations which restrict the scope of universal love. Some people exhort

men to love others, but they do not clearly explain the reason for it. They do not answer the question why one should love others.

Why should man act in a particular way? Why should he practice this or that virtue? What is the basis of universal love? Why should one do good to others–why not do the harm ? Lord Krishna the spiritualist teacher answered these questions and doubts raised by the materialist scientists. Love for others is not a virtue imposed a man, but it is the very realisation of one's own self which is one and which is shining through everything in the universe. This is the secret how love struggles with hatred and comes out triumphant in the end. The whole attempt of man knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, is to enlarge and expand to the fullest limit, his real being, which is coextensive with the universe and all that is in it. So universal love is the real nature of man and hatred is a contradiction of his true nature. The Gita explains this secret and exhorts man to be equal-minded towards all creatures without any distinction whatsoever.

NEW LINES OF THOUGHT IN THE GITA

We shall now consider how the Gita gives new interpretation to the old concepts of the *Sastras*, and thereby adds strength and vitality to society as a whole. *Yajna, Tyaga, Yoga, Sanyasa, and Tapasya*— these are some of the most important religious concepts which we familiarly come across in the *Sastras*. The Gita interprets them in a new way, and draws an inner meaning and significance which is not found in earlier religious works. We shall take note of what these concepts meant formerly, and how the Gita transforms them by giving a wider and universal import. The common man felt it impossible to practice these concepts of religion like *yagna, tapas*, and so on. So people felt disappointed and discouraged in their religious life. Lord Krishna came to the rescue of the common man by interpreting these concepts in a way within the reach of all mankind.

Yajna :- *Yajna* (sacrifice) is one of the prescribed duties of religious life. But the common man finds it far beyond him to perform it. In the past, kings and wealthy lords used to

perform *yajna*, because it required large sums of money, the services of many people, (*Hota*, *Udgata*, *Ritvik* etc.) scholars of *sastraic* learning, and a host of others for minor duties. How can the common man secure all these things? So men of wealth and power only undertook the performance of *yajna*. But compared to the vast paraphernalia, labour and expense needed for the *yajna*, the fruit of *yajna* is very small. Because *yajna* is a work of desire, its fruit naturally is of a lower level. It cannot give immortality or liberation which should be the aim of all those who practice religion. Considering all this, Lord Krishna gives a new interpretation to the concept of *yajna*, which is within the reach of the common people, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, man or woman. This new *yajna* does not require money or the services and cooperation of others. Each individual can perform it under all conditions of life. This *Yajna* is *Nishkama-karma* desireless work. Any work done without the feeling of doership is a *Maha Yajna*—a great sacrifice. Any work done, with the constant remembrance of God, is transformed into a holy sacrifice. This is the universal *yajna* prescribed by Lord Krishna in the Gita. According to this principle, any work of worldly life, can be converted into a sacred sacrifice. Every man can do it. Arjuna himself sublimated a bloody war into a great sacrifice by keeping the Lord constantly before him.

The teacher of the Gita considers repetition of God's name reading of holy books, control of food habits, and all types of discipline, as various forms of *yajna*, and the fruit, not small and trifling, but—infinite. This *yajna* has the power to cut the bonds of *karma*, and raise man to his original state of knowledge and freedom. All other forms of *yajna*, performed for the fulfilment of desire, only strengthen bondage.

Therefore by following the easy path revealed by Lord Krishna, every man can transform his daily work and worldly activity into a sublime sacrifice, and free himself from the bondage of *Karma*. The fruits of work beeing surrendered to God, every little act of man becomes a great sacrifice. Otherwise the burden of life becomes unbearable, and the ever increasing load of *Karma* binds man to the wheel of birth and death endlessly. Lord Krishna showed the way out of the vicious

circle. In this manner, the Lord gave a new interpretation to the concept of *Yajna*, made it easy, gave it infinite fruit, and offered it to the common man as the universal path to reach the highest goal.

Tyaga, Sannyasa :– Formerly people used to think that *Tyaga* meant giving away all that belonged to them, and *Sannyasa* leaving wife and children and going into a forest. Thus the common man concluded that *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa* were not intended for him but for some exceptional human beings who could give up everything. But Lord Krishna gave a very wide interpretation to these concepts and pointed out that men in all conditions of life could practice these virtues.

The teacher of the Gita defines *Tyaga* as the surrender of the fruits of work to God. Not giving up work, but giving up the fruits of work to God is *Tyaga*. All men could practice this idea of *Tyaga*. Similarly for the concept of *Sannyasa*, Lord Krishna gives a new interpretation—

"Giving up worship of the sacred fire, or sitting idle without doing any work is not *Sannyasa* Doing work without attachment to results is *Sannyasa*. To give up the desire for enjoying the fruits of work is *Sannyasa*." The *Sannyasa* of the Gita is all work and no work. How wonderful! How easy is this *Sannyasa*! One need not leave his home ; one need not desert his wife and children : one need not resign his job : one need not wear the ochre robes ; one need not carry the bowl and staff : one need not go into solitude and seclusion. Wherever a person finds himself, there he can remain. What he finds necessary and what he is capable of, that work he can do It is enough simply to give up thinking of the results of his worldly activity, enough to root out the attachment for the fruits of his work. That is *Sannyasa*. Lord Krishna proclaimed this truth to the world. The house holders also can practise this virtue The path is open to all.

Yoga :– Let us consider the Gita-concept of *yoga*. People generally think of *yoga* as *Hatayoga* or *Ashtangayoga*, both of which are unsuitable to those who are leading a wordly life.

But the teacher of the Gita gives a new interpretation to the concept of *yoga*.

"Whether work yields the expected result or not, to remain equal-minded is *yoga*." "Skill in the performance of work (giving up the desire for the fruits of work) is *yoga*." *Yoga* means that which unites the individual with the universal spirit, and whatever is conducive to this end is *yoga*. Therefore *Karma yoga*, *Bhakti yoga*, *Dhyana yoga* and *Jnana yoga*, are all mentioned in the Gita as various paths leading to union with the Supreme Being. No one need fear the practice of *yoga*. Those people, while remaining where they are, who could acquire some detachment from the results of their work, are practising *yoga*; those who remain steadfast in gain or loss are practising *yoga*. Such men are *yogis*. In fact all work which is conducive to God-realisation is *yoga*. This is the Gita interpretation of *yoga*, and Lord Krishna gave it to the world out of infinite compassion for humanity.

Tapas :- This is a word familiar to all people. But it is at the same time a terror to the common man. It meant for him dire mortification of flesh by starvation, exposing oneself to the burning heat of the Sun, or standing upside down in the midst of fire or water, and such like feats of physical endurance and bodily suffering. So no one thought of it. It was considered beyond the capacities of the common man. But the '*Sastras*' declare that by '*Tapas*' alone all sins could be destroyed "*tapasa kilbisham hanti*." There is no other way. In this predicament, Lord Krishna came out with a new definition of the word, far deeper in meaning and significance than the ancient conception. In the seventeenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna declares, "Ye Aspirants and seekers of spiritual Truth! *Tapas* is necessary for liberation. But it is not the painful injuring of the flesh and bodily suffering as you imagine it to be. It is an easy practice useful for all people. There are three forms of *Tapas*: *Tapas* for purity of body, for purity of speech, and for purity of mind. Worship of God, reverence and service to wise men and teachers, cleanliness, integrity, celibacy, and non-injury—these are conditions of *tapas* for the physical body. To speak truthfully and without passion, to study holy books,—these are the

conditions of *Tapas* for speech. Purity of thought and feeling, silence, control of the senses,—these are the conditions of *Tapas* for the mind."

This *Tapas*, as enunciated by the Lord, is within the reach of the common man, and can be practised by all with some effort. The *Gita tapas* aims at cleansing the dirt and filth attached to the senses and the mind. Man has passed through several incarnations in a state of ignorance. Consequently the mind is permeated with lust and greed, sensual appetites and desire and passion. The *Gita-tapas* is intended to control the outward pull of the senses, and the impulses of the mind. Purity of mind (*chittasuddhi*) is the only way to self-realisation. There is no other way. Just as gold is purified by being put in the fire, even so, *Tapas* purifies the mind, so that the self-existent *Atman* could reveal itself in all its glory and splendour.

In this way, the Gita has done the greatest good to mankind. It has reclaimed into the spiritual fold all those who feared religion as a negation of all that hold dear in this world. Today the large field of religion is filled with devotees and aspirants, because the Gita has shown them the easy path of spiritual practice, to each man according to his capacity and mental predisposition.

THE FORM OF THE GITA

The Gita consists of eighteen chapters. Like the *Vedas*, it is divided into three parts. The first part of the *Vedas*, the *Samhita*, deals with rituals (*Karma*); the second part deals with worship (*Upasana*); the third part deals with the knowledge of the Supreme (*Jnana*), and constitutes the *Upanishads*. As the Gita is the essence of the *Vedas*, its form consists also of three parts, each six-chapters forming one part. The first part deals with *Karma yoga*; the second with *Bhakti yoga*; and the third with *Jnana yoga*. This cannot be a rigid mechanical division. In all the three parts we find references to all the three parts of *yoga*. So we must consider the division of parts only as a convenient external classification. If we understand the Gita clearly, we find in the *Karma yoga* part, implied and explicit references to *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. So it is with the other parts

also. All the three *yogas* are essential for spiritual life. One should possess the heart of Buddha, the head of Sankara, and the hand of Janaka. All these three qualities are bound up together in the Gita to help mankind to attain the highest goal.

The first chapter of the Gita and the first ten verses of the second chapter are considered as prologue to the main work. The teaching of the Gita actually starts with the eleventh verse of the second chapter (*Asochyananva sochastvam.*) Therefore that verse is called the *Bija*, in the *Anganyasa* (i.e.) touching the different limbs of the body with appropriate *Mantras*. Similarly, the last verses from the seventy third verse of the eighteenth chapter a e called the Epilogue This consists of the speeches of Arjuna and Sanjaya. All that comes in between the Prologue and the Epilogue, is the stream of wisdom flowing from the lips of the divine master. The doubts and questions put forward by Arjuna are just the same as those of the common seeker. As the Gita is in the form of a conversation, all doubts are cleared, and all questions are answered atonce directly.

Although the essence of Divinity is taught through out the book, the idea is made manifest in the *Viswarupasandarsana yoga*, in the eleventh chapter. This is the unique feature of the Gita. It is not enough to hear philosophical theory. Direct experience is necessary. The practical side of spiritual life is brought out in the eleventh chapter. In the teaching of meterial sciences, theory is demonstrated by practical experiments. So in the Gita, almost in the central part of the work, Lord Krishna reveals his universal form, and emphasises the need and importance of practical experience for the aspirants. They should no doubt know the theory, but the aim should be to have direct experience of the Divine.

The Gita teaches all the different paths of *yoga*. But they are mainly classified as *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana yogas*. When we read each theory expounded by the Lord, we feel as though he is emphasising only that theory above all the others. For those who are inclined to a life of activity, it appears that the Gita teaches *Karma yoga*. They find ample evidence for it. Similarly for men of devotion and for men of

rational thought, the Gita appears to emphasise *Bhakti* and *Jnana*. But the teacher of the Gita brought into harmony all the paths of *yoga* and taught their essential unity and importance for God-realisation. Therefore the Gita is the *yoga* of synthesis. Whatever path one may follow, the aspirant honours all the creeds, and knows fully well that all paths lead to the same goal. It is this universality which is the unique feature of the Gita.

THE MAIN IMPORT OF THE GITA

The Gita explains all the systems of religion. But what is its main teaching? On what aspect does the teacher of the Gita concentrate? Philosophers have tried to answer this question, but naturally there is no unanimity among them. We shall consider here one or two view points. Generally the main import of a work is determined by applying the six canons of critical interpretation. These six canons are (1) the beginning and end (2) practice (3) originality (4) the result (5) reason (6) argument. Some commentators argue that devotion and self-surrender is the main theme of the Gita. They interpret the work according to the six canons and show evidence in supp rt of their view point

(1) Beginning :-

(sishyaste 'ham sh:dhi mam tvam p apannam.)

"Oh Lord! I am your disciple; I surrender to you; command me (what my duty is)." The Gita therefore starts with surrender

End :-

(Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja.)

"Oh Arjuna! Give up all things (to me) and surrender to me (the Supreme One)."

So the Gita ends with surrender.

Middle :-

(Ananyaschintayanto mam ye janah paryupasate
Tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham)

"Those who think of me continuously with single-minded devotion, I take care of them." Therefore the beginning, middle and end of the Gita teaches devotion and self-surrender.

(2) Practice :-

1. *mayyeva mana adhatsva*
2. *adveshta sarvabhutanam*
3. *ye yatha mam prapadyante*
4. *mameva ye prapadyante*

These verses and some more in chapters 7, 10, 11, and 15 teach the practice of surrender.

(3) Original concept :-

Though *Karma, Bhakti, Jnana yogas* are taught all-through the Gita, its main thesis is *Bhakti* combined with *Jnana* and desireless action. This is the transcendental theory of the Gita.

(4) Result :—

(karishye vachanam tava)

"I will carry out your word." To do the word of God, to act according to the will of God, is an act of surrender to the Supreme. Here again devotion is emphasised.

(5) Reason :—

(svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat.)

That work which is done in a spirit of devotion and surrender, though it is very little, would yield the greatest good, and save man from the fear of death and *Samsara.*

The example of Janaka and others proves it. These great men acted in the world in a spirit of complete surrender to God.

(6) Argument —

1. *mayyaveshya mano ye mam nityayukta upasate*
2. *teshamaham samuddharta mirtyu samsara sagarat.*

Verses like these provide arguments for the practice of devotion and surrender.

In this way, according to the six canons of interpretation and other references, it is held by some aspirants that devotion and self-surrender is the main import of the Gita

Some others declare that *Nishkamakarma* (action without personal desire) is the main import of the Gita. They argue that, what Arjuna did after listening to the Lord's teaching, should be regarded as the main thesis of the Gita. Arjuna declined to do his duty, and collapsed in the chariot in a mood of despair and weakness. The Gita-teaching roused him into righteous action, and he jumped into the field of battle with courage and confidence, and fulfilled his duty. He did not go and sit in a corner and spend his life. He did not become a *Sannyasi* and return into the solitude of a forest. He performed his prescribed duty without being perturbed by the results of it. Therefore the main import of the Gita should be the execution of one's own duty unmindful of the result. Thus *Karma yoga* is regarded by these aspirants as the ultimate aim of the Gita-message. They produce strong evidence from the text to support their view point.

Now, a third type of aspirants consider that *Jnana* (knowledge) is the main import of the Gita. What is the cause of Arjuna's sorrow and despondency?— Ignorance and delusion. How was it removed?—by knowledge. *(nashto mohah) (mohoyam vigato mama)* says Arjuna. So, Arjuna's ignorance was removed by *Jnana*, and then he became fit to fight the battle. Ignorance could be removed only by knowledge and by no other means. Darkness could be removed only by light and in no other way. Arjuna was the victim of ignorance and he was saved by *Jnana*. His sorrow was removed by the knowledge of *Atman*. *(tarati sokamatmavit)*

"The knower of Brahman transcends all sorrow." That is what the Upanishads say. Even in the second chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna taught the knowledge of *Atman*. It is the starting point of the Lord's teaching. When the master opened his lips to speak, he did not speak either of *Bhakti* or *Karma*. He spoke of the supreme reality, the immortal *Atman*, the knowledge of the Supreme. He described the Self-state, the all-pervading, the birthless and deathless Self, the *Atman*. "Oh Arjuna! You are not the physical body, composed of the five elements; You are the ancient one, the immortal immovable *Atman*-the sprite immanent in the whole universe"—says the

Lord. It is repeated again and again. Because the knowledge of *Atman* alone could remove the ignorance of man, and free him from the cycle of birth and death, Lord Krishna started his teaching with the basic concept of *Jnana*. In the course of his message, he reveals wonderful truths about *Jnana*.

Having uttered those magnificient truths in the course of his teaching, he concludes with the sublime declaration—

[adhyeshyate cha ya imam dharmyam samvadamavayoh
jnanayajnena tenahamishtasyamiti me matih.]

This is the Lord's conclusion to the Gita. "He who studies the Gita which never swerves from truth, and which is in the form of a dialogue between us two, worships me through *Jnanayajna*." As the Lord speaks of the whole of the Gita as *Jnanayajna*, it should be clear that *Jnana* is the main import of the work.

Besides,—

[jnanitvatmaiva me matam.]

"The man of knowledge is Myself" This must naturally emphasise that *Jnana* is the supreme truth of the Gita. We should not take into consideration only the immediate effect of the Gita on Arjuna's life. We should consider the whole of Arjuna's life and understand what effect the Gita had on his life's purpose. This is the proper way of understanding the effectiveness of the Gita. Let us trace Arjuna's life after the battle of Kurukshetra. He lived as king and house-holder for some years. He performed all the duties of a king. Later, he relinquished everything, went into solitude, and performed *Tapas* for ultimate union with the Supreme One. This is narrated in the *Swargarohana Parva* of *Mahabharata*. So whatever might be the number of births that a man passes through, and whatever might be his spiritual practice, it is only when he could withdraw the mind from its outward attraction, and direct it inwards to look into the soul, that he could attain perfection which is the highest spiritual goal.

(Atmasamstham manah kritva na kinchidapi chintayet.)

Statements like these explain the same idea. So knowledge is the final refuge of mankind. Knowledge alone could remove sorrow and confer bliss.

(Sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapyate.)

"All rituals and devotional practices culminate in *Jnana*." All forms of devotion and surrender help to purify the mind, by which man realises God. The goal is Self-realisation. In the following verse, the Lord clarifies the position.

(tesham satatayuktanam bhajatam pritipurvakam
dadami buddhiyogam tam yena mamupayantite.)

"On those who are attached to me by love and worship me, I bestow the power of discrimination *(Buddhiyoga)* by which they reach me (God)." The above verse explains how selfless work, devotion, meditation etc., help to rouse knowledge, and how knowledge leads to liberation. To know one's true Self is liberation. That knowing is called *Jnana*. But such power does not come easily for all. By God's grace alone, man attains that knowledge. By doing selfless work, by worship, by repeating and singing God's name and glory, by *Japa* and *Tapas*, by doing good to others, by all these put together and much more, man acquires the Grace of God. Devotion—Grace—Knowledge — this is the natural order of progress owards thetSupreme. The elders say—

He who worships God (through good work desireless of enjoying the fruits) receives God's grace, and by grace knowledge dawns, and by knowledge man attains liberation. This is the essence of the Gita.

A great man was once asked what he considered to be the sum and substance of the Gita. He replied 'W' — meaning that 'Work, Worship and Wisdom' (W × W × W) in their natural order, is the main idea of the Gita. Through work, devotion; through devotion, Knowledge; through Knowledge, liberation.

Therefore, knowledge which removed Arjuna's sorrow and delusion (*shoka* and *Moha*), and which alone dispels ignorance, might be taken as the main import of the Gita. The other *Yogas* are aids to purify the mind without which knowledge is impossible for Gods or men. With Knowledge man attains the Supreme and reaches the end of all his endeavours.

THE GITA TEACHING

Gita has the miraculous power of elevating man to the plane of Godhead. Otherwise how was it possible that an ordinary mortal like Arjuna was transformed into a Mahatma? The entire prospect of life with all its elevations and depressions, with all its light and darkness, with all its pleasures and pains, was revealed to Arjuna in a moment. What is that Gita-message that lifted him to the peak of divine knowledge in such a short time?

Like the school-master who takes his student step by step through the graded lessons of his subject, Lord Krishna took his disciple by the hand, and lifted him up one step above the other, till he reached the abode of blessedness and divine freedom. Starting from the simple injunction "*mam namaskuru* = 'Bow to me God)', the disciple was taught all the spiritual laws, culminating in the *Maha vakya* '*tattvamasi*'—Thou art That (the Supreme Brahman ." It was out of love that Lord Krishna taught all the secrets of spiritual life. The heart of Gita is the heart of a mother. No mother could look with unconcern when her children suffer pain and grief. So the Gita-mother, moved with infinite pity at the spectacle of human suffering, has offered every kind of relief and remedy to the innumerable shocks and ills of human life. First the secret of *Karma yoga* is taught; then again the doctrine of *Bhakti*. Not content with it, the method of *Dhyana* was taught. Again, not satisfied with it, the knowledge of the Supreme is revealed. Thus having taught every kind of spiritual practice, and having revealed every source of strength, peace, and blessedness for mankind, the Gita-mother fulfilled her great duty to her beloved children.

KARMAYOGA - IN THE GITA

No one should commit the mistake of consigning the Gita as a study fit only for *Sannyasins* who live in solitary caves and hills. It is the most beneficient contribution towards the peace and happiness of the house-holders also. It is a study most necessary for people who live in crowded cities, and are engaged in the different avocations of worldly life. For the businessman, the statesman and the soldier, the worker in the factories, the labourer in the fields and streets, the advocate,

judge, or teacher, in short, for all people, the study of the Gita is an essential part of life's equipment. It regulates practical life according to the highest laws of spirituality, and *Karma yoga* enunciatas the principal and practice of action in the every day life of the common man. The Gita points out that supreme liberation could be attained while taking part in the activities of earthly life. People think that *Vedanta* and practical life are different things, like parallel lines which never meet. It is not so. It is a grievous error to imagine that *Vedanta* is somewhere in the sky, which is sought for by *Sannyasins* who practise renunciation. The Gita says—Religion must rule even worldly pursuits. The Gita stands like a bridge accross the vast gulf between worldly life and Godliness. It reveals the secret of peace in the midst of the conflicting spectacle of worldly life; the secret of complete renunciation in the midst of all the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of a house-holder's life. Lord Krishna taught the supreme skill *(karmasu kausalam)* to remain perfectly actionless in the midst of tremendous action.

The man who has mastered this skill is in a state of absolute calmness while performing momentous work in the world. The limbs are active, the senses do their functions, the mind exercises its diverse powers, the whole man is apparently in a state of flux and motion, but at the same time, the real inner man remains unaffected by any of those activities. The real man is just like the axle of a wheel. The wheel might rotate at infinite speed, but the axle is firm and fixed. So is the real man behind the functions of the physical body and mind. This knowledge and this skill is what is termed *Karma yoga*.

(Yogasthah kuru karmani)

"With the mind firmly fixed in the *Atman*, do you work." "Surrender the fruits of action to God, and then perform any work, as much work as you wish. Such work does not bind you." This is the teaching of Lord Krishna. In Mathematics we have a theory—Infinity+anything = infinity. Whatever is added, subtracted, or multiplied by infinity remains infinity. God is infinity. Knowledge of God is infinity. So whatever work is done with the thought and knowledge of God becomes

God. Such work cannot bind man to the wheel of *Karma*. This is the secret of *karma yoga* taught in the Gita.

On the other hand, work that is done for the sake of personal enjoyment, forgetful of the Supreme Lord, binds man eternally to the wheel of birth and death. Man cannot escape it. "Work divourced from spirituality is an artificial flower which has neither life nor fragrance." So, work in itself is not great. The method of work is really great. The Gita does not say what man should do. It does not limit the field of man's activity in the world. It tells us how to work. The 'how' is of the greatest importance for the *Karma yogi*. The spiritual law behind the work should be grasped and held firm in the depths of one's consciousness, so that it throws its divine light on all that he does. Thus the method of work elevates man to the plane of Godhead, or degrades him to the level of a beast. The Gita exhorts all men to pursue their prescribed duties. Men passing through the different phases of life could carry on their duties uninterupted. Let the trader do his shopkeeping, the public servant continue his job. The farmer [illegible] the field, the soldier fight, the Brahmin recite *Mantras* and [illegible] on. Each man in his proper place, doing his proper work, the inexorable movement of the world goes on unabated. But there is only one condition—*mamanusmara*.

"Remember Me (God)" Remembering God, in the immediate presence of God, with the fruits of work surrendered to Him, man should work. This is the Command of Gita Then the poison that defiles work and makes it the cause of bondage neutralised and work is purified into an act of godliness.

The art of work, Vedanta in daily life, is the characteristic feature of the Gita. It is that which has rendered Gita the universal gospel. The Gita teaches that, even after attaining *Jnana*, one need not give up his prescribed duty. Though Arjuna was freed from delusion, he did not give up his worldly duty as Kshatriya and house-holder.

BHAKTIYOGA IN THE GITA

Though different theories of religious practice are taught in the Gita, it is one continuous stream of enquiry into the divine

It is *yoga*. The practical application of religious theory to life is *yoga*. *Yoga* is the union of the individual-self with the universal. As human nature is diversified by different qualities, it was necessary for the Gita to chalk out different paths for different types of persons. Medical science has different branches to counteract different diseases. So, it is with religion. The purpose of religion is to attain the supreme state of Godhead. But the obstacles which each individual has to encounter are different, and hence different paths of *yoga* are prescribed by wise men.

Jaimini's *Karma* theory, Narada's *Bhakti* cult, Patanjali's *Raja yoga*, and Vyasa's *Jnana* doctrine, all these are well propounded in the Gita. It is something like a large scale general stores, where all things necessary for life are available. Each man gets what he wants. It is the merit of the Gita that all *yogas* are brought into perfect harmony, and each is fitted into the others to make every path a well designed plan of liberation. In proper proportion, an admixture of all ingredients of *yoga* is necessary for man's progress towards perfection Purification is attained by *Karma yoga*; illumination by *Bhakti* and *Dhyana*; union by *Jnana yoga*. Brick, mortar, and wood are needed to build a house; dough, ghee, and heat are needed to prepare bread. Likewise *Karma*, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* are needed for liberation. A three-legged stool cannot stand if one of its legs is cut off. If any ingredient of the three *Yogas* is missing, then it cannot be complete and perfect. So great men achieved perfection by harmonising different creeds and doctrines of spiritual practice. Ofcourse, according to the predisposition of each individual, he chooses a particular *yoga* as the main path, but others are found implicit in it. The chief purpose of all *yogas* is nothing but the elimination of the Ego

Love of God is *Bhakti*, and when that love glows into ecstasy, the devotee says 'Thou art my sole refuge; I know not else.' He puts himself solely in the hands of God and acts as his servant. "Thou art everything; all is thine; nothing mine; Thou art father and mother; I am your servant"—so speaks the devotee to the Lord. Arjuna appealed to the Lord—

(sadhimam tvam prapannam.)

Please teach me who have taken refuge in you. But the Gita is not satisfied with ordinary *Bhakti*. It eagerly awaits the ripening of ordinary *Bhakti* into *ananyabhakti*. That which has no otherness is *Ananyabhakti* It is to be noted that the ward *ananya* is used several times in the Gita. It means that the mind as a whole is to be offered to the Lord, no other thought intruding or no other feeling mingling with that of divine love. "The devotee who possesses this supreme love undefiled by any worldly taint is most dear to me. Him I save from the ocean of death and *Samsara*"—says Lord Krishna with deep compassion. If the mind is distracted by worldly thoughts, and deviates from its divine object, it should be brought back and fixed on God, by slow and continuous practice. The aim should not be given up, for, there is only one thing in the universe that is real, imperishable, and eternal, and that is the Supreme Self. All other things are ephemeral and transitory To run after them in the hope of enjoying life is to court sorrow, disaster, and death. Peace and happiness could never be obtained from them at any time. Therefore the individual human being who is deluded by the temptations of *Maya*, should seek shelter and refuge at the feet of God who has *Maya* under his control, who could manifest it or withdraw it at his will.

Without the grace of God and *Guru*, man cannot cross the ocean of *Samsara*. This is a deep secret. Not knowing it, the man who is proud of his own powers and faculties, attempts to achieve the impossible (i.e.) to grasp the infinite with the finite mind. God alone is above *Maya*, and holds it as his instrument—

(*mayinantu maheswaram.*)

All others are subject to *Maya*. Delusions bewilder the mind, obstacles stand insuperable on the way, doubts, fears, temptations, paradoxes, perplexities, and a host of subtle indefinable impediments bar the way to liberation. So man is exhorted to seek for God's protection in the course of his spiritual *Sadhana*. As love of God develops, gathers strength and momentum, man feels the spirit of freedom from the clutches of *Maya*. The Lord himself takes care of such devotees.

(*tesham nityabhiyuktanam yogakshemam vahamyaham*)

Thus the Lord pledges his unfailing protection to his devotees.

Discrimination between Self and non-self which directly leads to *Atma Jnana* cannot come to man without God's grace. Deep devotion to God should first fill the heart of the devotee, before he could rise above the temptations of worldly life.

(*bhaktya jnanam prajayate.*)

"Out of *Bhakti*, arises *jnana*"–The *Sastras* say so, and the experience of great men is also the same. The flower of *Bhakti* should blossom first, and from it takes shape the fruit of *Jnana*. In the *Bhakti yoga* of the Gita, the Lord declares that; Pleased with the love of the devotee, he bestows on him the fruit of *Jnana*, the power to know the Truth by rejecting what is not real. From this we understand what importance is attached to *Bhaktiyoga*.

The teacher of the Gita emphasises *Para–Bhakti* (supreme devotion) and is not satisfied with elementary devotion. To worship with flowers and fruits is ordinary *Bhakti*. To worship the Lord with those objects created by the Lord himself, is afterall insignificant. The Lord is mightily pleased when man worships him with the flowers of divine virtue. (*daivi sampat.*) cultivated carefully in the garden plot of his own mind. This is supreme worship, supreme *Bhakti*. Therefore Lord Krishna, when he explains *Bhakti*, refers to divine qualities like love, compassion, friendship etc. It should however be noted that ordinary forms of worship are not decried or precluded in the Gita Indeed, ordinary external worship will lead to *Para-Bhakti* by gradual process. The aspirant should not stop with external worship as an end in itself. He should cultivate constantly and persistently the divine qualities mentioned by the Lord, so that *Bhakti yoga* may become complete and perfect.

Of all the *Yogas*, *Bhaktiyoga* is the easiest, because it is congenial to human nature. Hard discipline is not prescribed for this path. It is enough that man should develop a feeling of love for his chosen Deity So *Bhakti* is mentioned in every chapter of the Gita. Even in the fourteenth chapter where Supreme *Jnana* in taught, the last *sloka* dwells on *Bhakti*.

"He who worships me with immovable faith and love, transcends the three *gunas* and becomes one with supreme

Brahman." In the *Viswarupasandarsana yoga* the Lord again states that by supreme *Bhakti* alone any one could aspire to see His universal form.

"By supreme *Bhakti* alone, it is possible to see and know my universal form and to enter Me (God)." Nothing else can achieve this union with the universal.

In the *Akshra parabrahma yoga*, it is declared that the Supreme Purusha is attained only by single-minded devotion to God.

At one place, the Lord says *bhaktyamamabhijanati*—"Man knows me through *Bhakti*." So the Lord insists on *Bhakti* as the key to God-realisation.

RAJAYOGA IN THE GITA

The Sun's rays contain seven colours. When they are merged together, the rays appear white. In the rainbow we see the phenomena of the seven colours separately. Herbs and plants and flowers absorb those colours which they need and flourish in strength and beauty. If the Sun's rays are only of one colour, there could never be such variety of colour and fragrance in nature. Similarly in the Gita, eighteen different *yogas* are presented so that the aspirants might adopt any one congenial to their nature and attain liberation. From the circumferance to the centre of a circle, there are innumerable radii, and through any one of them one can reach the centre. Among the various paths revealed in the Gita, *Rajayoga* is one. It is also termed *Dhyanayoga* or *Atma-Samyamayoga*. Patanjali expounded this wonderful science in all its details. *Rajayoga* has eight component parts, and so it is also called *Ashtangayoga*. The component parts are in their order—

1. *Yama*, 2. *Niyama*, 3. *Asana*, 4. *Pranayama*, 5. *Pratyakara*, 6. *Dharana*, 7. *Dhyana*, 8. *Samadhi*. These eight parts are well explained in particular places in the Gita. The Lord has clarified the essential principles of *Rajayoga* in the Gita.

The place, the manner, and the discipline which the aspirant should choose for the practice of *Rajayoga* are clearly stated in the sixth chapter of the Gita. The teacher of the Gita

warns the aspirant to be careful in details relating to food, place, and practice. The Gita refers to minute details and is not content with the exposition of general theory. Neglect of the smallest details might lead to disasterous consequences in *Rajayoga*. So, what food to take, how to sit for practice, where to concentrate, and such other matters are clearly stated in the Gita. Following the details with meticulous care, the *Sadhaka* should get firm hold of this *Yoga*.

What is *Yoga*? Patanjali, the scientific exponent of *Rajayoga*, defines the word as—

(yogaschittavrittinirodhah)

"Yoga is restraining the modifications of the mind." By the very force and momentum of impulses acquired through several births, the senses and the mind rush out and run after the objects of the external world. This out-going momentum should be restrained. Just as the tortoise withdraws all its limbs in its body, even so, the *Sadhaka* should withdraw and withhold the mind from attaching itself to any sense-objects like colour, sound, fragrance etc., and fix it in the *Atman*.

(tada drashtuh swarupe 'vasthanam)

When these sense-attractions are restrained by long practice of discrimination and dispassion, the mind of its own accord comes to a state of rest and settles in its own original source, the *Atman*. This is the very essence of *Rajayoga*. The teacher of the Gita puts it in a nutshell in the following words—

(atmasamstham manah kritva nakimchidapi chintayet)

"Fixing the mind in the *Atman*, nothing else should be thought of." Here we find two aspects of the same position—one, forgetting the sense world, two, memory of the *Atman*. Forgetting the sense-world is not alone enough. People experience this in a state of deep sleep where there is no sense activity and hence no world. But sleep never leads to illumination. So the second aspect, namely the remembrance of the *Atman* is necessary. In the early stages, the mind cannot remain in a state free from thought modifications. So the *Sadhaka* has to satisfy the natural craving of the mind by providing it with healthy work like deep study, discrimination, and devotion to God. By

systematic and continuous practice, the mind becomes finer and finer, till it reaches a non-modified state when the *Atman* is perceived as it is. There is then no modification or fragmentation of the mind. It is all one. So the mind should be first lifted from lower to higher thoughts and from higher thoughts to a thought-free state. The thought-free state is called *Samadhi*.

It is not an easy achievement, because the mind is by nature unsteady and fitful. Arjuna says—"Like the air, it is most difficult to control the mind." This is due to the mental predispositions acquired through an endless services of past births. So the mind should develop dispassion by constantly understanding the transitoriness and the worthlessness of worldly things. It is then turned inwards to look into the Self from which alone comes all the bliss which man by his ignorance was imagining as arising from external objects. If this practice is continued daily at a particular time, for a particular period, the mind comes under control gradually. So Lord Krishna says—"The mind should be held by practice and dispassion. He made it clear that the mind could not be controlled except by practice and dispassion. *Vedanta* teaches the same truth. When attchments are given up, the mind is destroyed, and when the mind is destroyed, there is direct perception of the Supreme Reality. This is the order of progress towards final liberation. Again, it is by an understanding of the Reality that the mind is purified of its material tendencies. When material tendencies drop off, the mind ceases to exist and that very moment Supreme Realisation dawns on man. The *Rajayoga* has for its basic principle mind-control, and towards this end, the Gita prescribes the practice of mind-control in various ways.

JNANAYOGA IN THE GITA

What is the cause of sorrow for the *Jiva* (Individual man)? —the body. How did the body come ?—by *Karma* (action in the world). What is the cause of action ?— Desire. What is the cause of desire ?—Ignorance. How could ignorance be removed? —by knowledge.

Therefore sorrow is rooted out only by knowledge. The *Jiva*, having forgotten his real nature, is bound by the body and the world; and when he comes to know his real nature, he is free from the bondage of matter. Such contemplation on one's own real nature is what the elders speak of as *Jnana*. Those who aspire for supreme peace and freedom should acquire Knowledge of their true Self. "By attaining Knowledge, man experiences supreme peace." The Lord glorifies *Jnana* in many ways—

1. *Jnana Tapasya* :— Many have become pure by *Jnana tapasya*.
2. *Jnana yajna* :— This sacrifice is greater than others performed with material riches.
3. *Jnana Nauka* :— The ocean of *samsara* could safely be crossed by the ship of knowledge.
4. *Jnana Agni* :— The fire of Knowledge burns the wilderness of *Karma* (action in the world).
5. *Jnana Khadga* :— Doubt caused by ignorance should be struck down by the sword of Knowledge.

Oh! How many metaphors does the Lord use to glorify *Jnana* ! Not satisfied with these, he compares *Jnana* in the fifth chapter to the all—illuminating Sun. Again in the tenth chapter, *Jnana* is compared to a light. Bhagawan communicates the wonderful quality and the unique power of *Jnana* in various ways in the fourth chapter.

"Oh, Ye men deluded by ignorance! Become pure by the penance of *Jnana*; perform *Jnana yajna* and get the reward of liberation; cross the ocean of *Samsara* with the help of the ship of knowledge kindle the fire of *Jnana* and burn up the wilderness of worldly actions; strike down all doubts with the sword of knowledge ; dispel the darkness of ignorance with the Sun of *Jnana*; Light the lamp of knowledge which sheds soft and divine light all around." Thus the Lord exhorts mankind to seek for knowledge.

What is *Jnana?* The material universe is a combination of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. The Self and the non-self, the body and the knower of the body, the seer and the seen, are all intermingled and appear as one to the ignorant man. To separate them, as the mythical swan separates water and milk, is *Jnana*·

To separate insentient matter from the intelligence that sees and knows it is *Jnana*. The comprehensive thesis of *Jnana* is elaborated in different chapters of the Gita—*Kshetra Kshetrajna vibhaga yoga*, *Gunatrayavidhaga yoga*, *Daivasura Sampadvibhaga yoga*, and *Sraddhatraya vibhage yoga*. *Vibhaga* means division, (i e.) dividing things which are intermingled When good and bad are intermingled, we try to separate them, hold the good, and reject the bad. The outer rind of a plantain is pealed off and the juicy part is eaten. When grain is mixed up with small pebbles, the housewife separates the grain with great care before food is prepared. So it is that the physical body *(upadhi)* which is an intermingling of the Self and the non-self, should be carefully examined, the non-self separated, and the true Self held fast by the seeker. This is *Jnana*. The body should be distinguished from the knower of the body, and man must realise his identity with the knower, and so be indifferent to the modifications of the body. This is *Jnana*. In everything there are five ingredients—existence, light, bliss, name and form. Man should realise that the first three ingredients are real, and the later two (i·e.) name and form, are unreal. This is *Jnana*.

Let us now try to understand what this body is and who the knower of the body. The five elements, the ego, the intellect, the *Avyakta*, the organs of action, the sense-organs, objects of sense-perception like sound and touch, the modifications of the mind, all these together constitute the *Kshetra*. The intelligence which sees and knows the *Kshetra* is termed *Kshetrajna*. "In everything of this material universe, know that I am the One cognising intelligence." This indomitable utterance of Lord Krishna is indeed the greatest boon to mankind. It is clear from it that the Supreme Lord of the universe is not far from us, but is directly present in the hearts of all, pure and uncontaminated, as the universal witness, he is the nearest to us, and he is shining through the mind. And so, we are filled with confidence that we could attain him with some effort. As it is said *(sarva kshetreshu)*, in all beings all mankind without distinction of race, religion and sex are entitled to realise him in their heart of hearts. If, by discrimination, any man can separate the five sheaths enveloping the *Atman-Annamayakosa*, *Pranamayakosa*, *Manomayakosa*, *Vijnanamayakosa*, and *Anandamayakosa*,— he would discover the *Atman* as the residual consciousness in his own heart. The experience of *Atman* is the fruit of *Jnana*. Therefore intellectual enquiry supported by will-power enables man to rise to the highest peak of spirituality, and then by an understanding of his true Self, man is transformed into God. He becomes the living-free *(Jivanmukta)* even in this body.

The work that a man does after he attains *Jnana* is absolutely pure and uncontaminated by desire or attachment, because he now knows the reality and is firmly fixed in the *Atman*, and observes the phenomenal universe as a witness or spectator looking at a wonderfully moving picture. In that state, he knows that he is not the doer. The body and mind are engaged in their own characteristic activities. The realised man is not caught in their meshes. He remains steadfast in the universal Self, absorbed in the contemplation of his true Self. There is no desire or attachment for the world. The *Jnani* may engage himself in work for the good of mankind; but he performs it unattached and is equally indifferent to its success or failure. Then the work he does acquires tremendous power. This is the difference between the *Jnani* and the *Ajnani*, in the performance of work. The *Ajnani* (ignorant man) identifies himself with the body and mind, and does every work with a strong desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. So he is bound to the wheel of *Karma*, and goes through the endless cycle of birth and death The *Jnani* on the other hand knows directly that he is not the body and mind. He knows that he is verily the Supreme *Sachidananda*, the imperishable *Atman*. He works without any egoistic thought or feeling. He knows that he is not the doer. He has no sense of I and mine. He is free and remains free in the midst of high and noble work. This is the secret of work, and the secret is revealed to man only by *Jnana*.

It is for this reason that the Lord opens his message in the second chapter with the fundamental declaration that the real man is not the body, is not subject to birth and death, has nothing to gain or lose by the visissitudes of fortune in the world. Having taught this basic truth, the Lord proceeds to

speak of non-attachment, and offers the *Mahamantra* of *Karma-yoga (yogasthah kuru karmani)* 'perform action being steadfast in *yoga*.' Therefore the work done by the realised soul is infinitely superior to, and yields far greater benefit to mankind than the work done by the ignorant and selfish.

After attaining *Jnana*, some seek for stillness and meditative silence in solitude, and others remain in the world and continue their work. The difference is due to the natural predisposition acquired in past births. But there is no difference between the two. Both belong to the state of the livingfree (*Jivanmukta)*. The work done by the realised soul is finally no-work for him, and yields the same fruit as the stillness and non-action of the *Mauni*.

Lord Krishna, King Janaka, King Ikshwaku, Sankaracharya, Vivekananda and others have done wonderful work for the benifit of mankind. But the supreme knowledge of Self which they possessed held them free from bondage to *Karma*. Therefore, either for complete renunciation or for full-scale action in the world, Knowledge is the first and foremost condition. Lord Krishna declares triumphantly — "There is nothing in the universe equal to *Jnana* in purity and perfection."

But, for the direct perception of reality the aspirant has to acquire the qualities of *Jnana*, like humility, modesty etc., which have been ennumerated in the thirteenth chapter of the Gita. Such mental purification, and acquisition of divine qualities are the absolute pre-condition for the realisation of the supreme Self.

And also in the seventh chapter, the Lord mentions four types of devotees in their proper order—the distressed man, the man who wants to know the Truth, the needy man, and the *Jnani*.

[udarahsarva evaite jnanitvatmaiva me matam]

"All these devotees are great, but among them the *Jnani* is Myself." Thus the Lord proclaims the sublimity of *Jnana* above everything else. The *Jnani* is God himself. There is no difference. Dualistic practices gradually blossom and ripen the heart

and mind, and the individual man is drawn into the recesses of his own soul where he finds his identity with the Supreme Being. In that state, there is no devotee to worship, and there is no God to be worshipped. Both shine forth as the One Supreme *Sachidananda*. This is the final goal of spiritual attainment. This is living-freedom. There is nothing more for man to seek or aspire for. Let everyone understand the supreme glory of *Jnana* and strive for attaining it even in this life.

PRACTICE IN THE GITA

Thus far we have spoken about the different paths of *Yoga*. Now we come to the practical side of *Sadhana* for attaining the goal. As we said already, the teacher of the Gita lays greater emphasis on practice than on theory. What are the basic laws of spiritual practice ? What are the difficulties and obstacles which the aspirant has to face and overcome in religious life ? What are the problems and perplexities that arise during the period of *Sadhana* ? Complete understanding of these details is necessary for the seeker. The Gita enlightens us on various matters in the course of its teaching, and the seeker is not left in doubt about any problem vital to his spiritual progress.

I. Be fearless –

The first and foremost obstacle to spiritual progress is fear, doubt, timidity, and weakness both of body and mind. "Can I ever hope to attain the goal? I have not the will-power to resist obstacles and temptations. Only the great *Rishis* and *Mahatmas* have been able to reach the goal. I am afterall a house-holder burdened with wife and children. How can I be free from cares and anxieties? How can I give up my attachment for my home and family? Spiritual life is practically impossible for one like me." We find many people talking in this strain when they think of God-realisation. The Gita commands them never to indulge in such self-ruinous thoughts and feelings of despair and hopelessness

(kshudram hridayadaurbalyam tyaktothishta parantapa)

"Oh, chastiser of the enemy, Arjuna; Give up this wretched weakness. Arise, do your duty." Through Arjuna as the

medium, the Supreme Lord exhorts all mankind again and again,—"Be fearless."

"With courage, steadfastness, and zeal; undaunted by failures or difficulties, do your duty with an equal mind." That is the first command of the Gita It is foolish to imagine that only *Sannyasins* are competent to attain liberation. The Gita never says so. The *Sastras* do not say that liberation is the monopoly of men belonging to any particular race, religion, or position. From start to finish, the Gita declares that liberation is the birthright of all mankind. But the aspirant should not be deterred by obstacles and failures on the way. He should continue his spiritual practice with complete faith in God, and his efforts would be crowned with success ultimately. As one overcomes one or two initial obstacles, his faith is redoubled and quicker progress becomes possible. The sincere seeker is never let down by the higher power, although to some there may be delay in the realisation of the cherished objective. So the first command of the Gita is to free the mind from all defeatist thoughts and feelings, never to yield to suggestions of helplessness and despair, in short to be fearless in the face of the most overwhelming obstacles and difficulties, and make steady progress with unswerving faith in God, *Guru*, and one's own Self.

II. Follow the law of moderation :—

It is good to be eager to reach the goal quickly, but one should not break his limbs in the attempt. One must have a stout heart, and in the period of *Sadhana*, one should have depth and firmness. "Slow and steady wins the race."

"Avoid extremes in all matters" say the elders. Lord Krishna therefore commands the seekers to follow the law of moderation. "Do not eat too much; do not give up food altogether; do not sleep too much; do not give up sleep altogether; be moderate in food, sleep, and in all other activities. Moderation leads to success in *Yoga* and the elimination of pain and sorrow." Lord Krishna teaches this golden rule to all aspirants. Every object in the world works longer and more efficiently if we use it carefully.

So also, the human body, the sanse-organs, and the mind should be kept fit, and used carefully to cross the ocean of *Samsara*. The human organism is the gift of God. It is the ship that takes us over the stormy sea of earthly life. If the ship is overburdened, it sinks in mid-ocean or it is otherwise damaged, and becomes unfit for further voyage All diseases of the body result from excess, and excessive strain in *yoga* results in damage to the delicate physical organism. Many seekers are carried away by excessive zeal in the early stages of *Sadhana*, and consequently they either fast too much or practice too hard and long, with the result that they become unfit both for spiritutal realisation and efficient worldly life. Knowing this, the teacher of the Gita insists on moderation as the golden rule of spiritual practice. The practice should be slow and gradually progressive— *(sanaiah sanaiah)* slowly and slowly The bodily mechanism has been accustomed by long usage to a particular mode of behaviour. To change it and give it a new functional mode takes long time. It cannot be done overnight Slow and steady practice is necessary. Even so, the mind is habituated to run in certain channels, predetermined by past thoughts and experiences. This should be changed slowly and gradually. So Lord Krishna wants every seeker to follow the law of moderation from first to last till the goal is attained finally and firmly.

III. Do not give up practice—cultivate dispassion :—

In the course of several births, the mind has been habituated to a wrong line of activity (i.e.) slavery to the objects of the material world. Now the seeker has to create for it altogether a new line of thought. Sensual pleasures have enslaved the mind through many births. It should now be turned away from matter and centred in the Spirit. Naturally, the mind reacts, rebels, struggles, and refuses to adopt the new discipline. The seeker might feel exhausted by the inner conflict and might be driven to the limits of endurance, and give up the practice altogether as an impossibility. Such is the great danger for the *sadhaka*. But if he persists in the practice regularly for a short period and at a prescribed time, the mind is brought under control, and takes to the discipline with greater ease and joy. If, in the initial stages, one or two obstacles are over come by

effort, the seeker gains faith in God and in his own power to conquer the rest.

In the sixth chapter of the Gita, Arjuna makes the common complaint that the mind is unsteady and wayward and very difficult to control. Lord Krishna said plainly that the obstacle should be met and overcome, and the only remedy to cure the mind of its waywardness is constant practice aided by dispassion. There is no other way. Arjuna was the nearest and the dearest to the Lord, a great friend and a beloved disciple and devotee. In spite of his great love for Arjuna, the Lord had no alternative but to impose the sternest discipline and self-effort as the only means of conquering the vagaries of the mind. If this is true in the case of Arjuna, it should be equally the same in respect of every one else. The seeker should practice mind-control in every way possible for him, by study, meditation, and above all by the company of holy man.

In the *Bhakti yoga*, while expounding some aspects of devotion, Lord Krishna teaches his devotee that he would attain Him (God) by fixing his mind in Him. The teacher knew that his disciple would immediately ask him how he could do this impossible feat. Anticipating the natural question, the Lord atonce affirms his answer that by practice alone would he be able to realise the aim.

(abhyasayogena tato mam ichaptum dhanamjaya)

Therefore, for mind-control and God-realisation, there is no other way except practice. The Lord elevates practice to the level of *yoga*, like *Karma*, *Bhakti*, or *Jnana*, by referring to it as *Abhyasa yoga*. We come across this term in the eighth chapter also. There the Lord declares that the practice of unbroken meditation on the supreme is the means of attaining the immortal *Brahman*. So, in all the different paths of *Yoga*, the *Yoga* of practice is the vital and life giving ingredient. Neither *Karma*, nor *Bhakti* nor *Jnana* could acquire strength and power without practice. Such is the importance of *Abhyasa yoga*.

When and how long should one continue the practice? The Gita answers—always and for ever. The power of *Maya* is inscrutable. Who can understand that mysterious power? Who

can say when, in what manner, and how, *Maya* overtakes the *Sadhaka*. Even scholars and great men are subject to *Maya*, not to speak of the ordinary seeker. Hence constant vigilence, unrelaxed practice, and alertness of mind are absolutely necessary from the beginning till the very end. "Therefore think of Me (God) at all times." This is the Lord's command. Lust and greed, indulgence in sensual pleasures, hatred are the eternal enemies of the man who seeks for spiritual realisation. They are ever ready to devour him at any moment when the seeker is off his guard. That is why Lord Krishna insists on ceaseless endeavour to keep off the enemy from whichever quarter the attack might come. With the sword of discrimination, he should cut to pieces any kind of temptations. "Therefore be vigilent—be ever more vigilent." So say the *Sastras*. In the Gita, the word *satatam* (always) is used several times So the Lord lays down continuous practice as the law. In the early stages, the seeker may prescribe for himself regular intervals of time for practice, but as he proceeds, he should aim at a continuous flow of divine thoughts and feelings Even at the moment of death, the memory of the Supreme *Brahman* and inherence in that state should be kept up for final liberation. So the Gita-mother exhorts the seeker to be vigilent till the last breath of his life. Otherwise, there is the danger of *Maya* intervening, and throwing the man off the divine ascent.

It is necessary to say something more about the practice of mind-control. The Gita indicates the method. Whenever the mind is unsteady and runs out towards sense-objects, it should be brought back slowly, and fixed in the *Atman*. Everytime the mind goes out and attaches itself to some fond dream of enjoyment, the seeker should persuade and coax it to return to its native home where it could have all the joy and more than it could hope to get anywhere else. The Gita wants the seeker to cultivate a discriminative understanding of the pain, suffering, and death caused by sense-objects. He should penetrate deeper into the reality of sense-objects so that he could see how vulgar, wretched, and short-lived they are. Thus he should develop an aversion for them, based on a clear perception of their worthlessness. (duhk *doshanudarsanam*

When the mind realises the foul and filthy nature of sensual pleasures, it turns away from them naturally, and it is then easily rooted in the *Atman*. On the other hand, if the mind is drawn to sense-enjoyment, it can never be brought under control to remain steadfast in spiritual meditation. The mind is ignorant of the bliss of God-realisation. It should be trained, educated, and taught persistently to see the worthless character of material pleasures. As dispassion develops, its wayward impulses lose their force gradually, and it becomes steady. Therefore the seeker should persevere in his *sadhana*, unmindful of the obstacles and failures. "Perseverence will ultimately conquer." The Lord's command should be carried out, and his promise to support the sincere seeker should inspire every one with courage and self-confidence during the period of *Sadhana*. The Gita enjoins dispassion as the most important aspect of *sadhana*.

IV Have faith; be free from doubt :—

The seeker should not have the least doubt about the reality of God and the unreality of the world. The *Sastras* have argued and reasoned out the issue in a hundred ways; and they have stated this final conclusion in unmistakable terms. They have made a thorough rational enquiry into the nature of things, and scientifically they have arrived at the truth that the Supreme alone is real, and everything else illusory. All great men have confirmed the truth of the *Sastras* through their personal experience "Therefore *Sastra* should be the law for you." If one rejects the *Sastras*, he would be lost in a wilderness of individual views, personal opinions, and a host of illusions, and delusions which one comes across endlessly in the present-day world. So it is perfectly safe for the aspirant to have faith in the *Sastras* and in the experience of holy men. "The man of doubt perishes"—Thus the Gita warns against doubt in the Truth of the eternal One. Besides this, the Gita says, *sraddhavan labhate Jnanam*. "The man of faith gains Knowledge." The above statement should be regarded as the *Ashtakshara Mahamantra* of the Gita. So with full faith in the Divine, transcending fear and doubt, man should strive to attain the highest spiritual goal.

The word *Sraddha* (faith) is used several times in the Gita. It shall be unto you as you think. The measure of reward is just equal to the measure of faith; no more, no less.

One's attitude to the Deity, the *Guru*, the *Mantra*, the Astrologer, the physician, and sacred places, will determine the resulting benifit from each of them. Therefore the real seeker should not allow any doubt to creep into his mind about the existence of the Divine. He should cultivate immovable faith in God. He should not be discouraged by obstacles or deterred by difficulties in his onward march to spiritual realisation.

CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES PROHIBITED BY THE GITA

The aspirant should follow the well-established paths for God realisation. Undesirable customs and practices not only fail to achieve the expected aim, but positively harm the seeker by causing mental disturbance and physical injury. Hence the teacher of the Gita ennumerates some of the erroneous and harmful practices and warns the devotee to avoid them carefully.

1. **Performing Yajna to satisfy desires**:— Spiritual life and sense-pleasures do not agree. One is antoganistic to the other, like fire and snow. He who desires sense-pleasures cannot attain liberation. Pleasures in this world or upper and lower worlds are the same in effect. They cause the downfall of man from spiritual ascent. Perhaps the pleasures of heaven may be more subtle and refined, but they are of no use for the spiritual aspirant.

The good acquired by *Yajna* is soon exhausted by enjoyment in Heaven, and down he falls into this world to start again his spiritual life from the very beginning. Tempted by sense-pleasure, men ascend to Heaven and descend to earth, and in this way countless number of births are wasted without permanent joy or peace. Therefore Lord Krishna prohibits all practices which whet the appetite for sense-leasures. All those practices which deviate from the aim of spiritual bliss and freedom should be considered worthless and dangerous by the real aspirant, whether such practices lead to enjoyments here or in other worlds. So long as the mind runs out for sensual pleasures, it cannot acquire one-pointed concentration, without which

there is no hope of liberation at any time. That is why the teacher of the Gita dismisses such pleasure-seekers as unlearned and thoughtless people. The same idea is expressed in the second chapter of the Gita also.

Therefore instead of wasting precious life in the performance of *Yajnas* which unhinge the mind and rouse passions of pride and pleasure, it is imperative for the real aspirant to practice desireless disciplines such as *Japayajna*, *Swadhyaya jnanayajna* and the like, which directly lead to the bliss of liberation.

2. State of inaction (Akarma :- Some people think that it is a high state of spiritual evolution to avoid action and do nothing. Some people consider it a sign of renunciation and dispassion. It is not so. So long as there are desires and predispositions in the mind, even though the body is kept back from action, man remains in bondage. Hopes and expectations, desires and enjoyments, continue to harass the mind. Those who are still and actionless should be either perfectly purified souls or lumps of dead earth, sunk in dark ignorance. For all outward appearances, both of them look alike. But there is all the difference of pole to pole between the two categories of men. The first type of men who have realised the vanity of the world and therefore remain still in spiritual contemplation, are very very rare. They are men to be worshipped. Their heart is thoroughly purified of all worldly taint. Whether they work or refrain from work, it is all the same for them They are free. But the rest of mankind should engage themselves in work. From the state of dark inactivity (*tamas*), they should rise to the active state (*Rajas*), and from that state, they should rise to the state of calm contemplation (*satva*). Purified (*suddha*) *satva* is a state of perfect stillness born of intense dispassion. The transcendental state is above all *gunas* (*gunatita*).

Therefore to be idle and do nothing is foolishness, and not philosophy or religion. Man falls to the level of the brute by such idleness and inaction. Lord Krishna says that action is far superior to inaction.

[karma jyayo hyakarmanah]

"The *Yoga* of *Karma* is superior to the renunciation of *Karma*." Thus Lord Krishna condemns the non-performance of prescribed duties. *Rajas* is better than *Tamas*. *Sattva* is better than *Rajas*. So instead of wasting time without doing anything, it is better to engage oneself in some work. Gradually work is purified and becomes selfless action. Through it, the impurities of the mind are cleared and man attains liberation. In this way, *Karma* finally leads to freedom from the bondage of *Karma*. The aspirant should be extremely cautions not to mistake dullness and lethargy for *sattvic* purity and calmness. The teacher of the Gita exhorts men to be strong and active in doing all work conducive to spiritual realisation.

3. The Charvaka Creed :— "What we see is real; there is no rebirth; so, during the short period of time, eat, drink, and enjoy life as much as you can. There is nothing more to do than to satisfy all material desires in this world." This is the line of thought of the *Charvaka* creed. The teacher of the Gita denounces this self-ruinous and anti-spiritual doctrine in the strongest terms. In the sixteenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna delivers a scathing denunciation of materialism, and the advocates of the *Charvaka* creed. "They are men of demonic qualities. They have no purity, no tradition, no truth. They explain creation as merely the outcome of the sex-act, and glorify the sex-instinct as the ultimate truth of creation. They deny the Supreme Lord. Such men are born to harm the world. They are obstinate and perverse and hold on to their foul and filthy ways of life. They indulge in sense-pleasures endlessly. They amass wealth by dishonest means, and feel proud of their power to injure the world, for their own selfish purposes. Such are the demonic creatures. I throw them down into heinous births, they have no grace or salvation." The Lord's impassioned utterance should be a warning to all aspirants to keep away from the destructive creed of the *Charvakas*. The seeker should cultivate faith in the Divine and spiritual laws. They should transcend the physical appetites and sense-pleasures, and regard the body no more than a useful instrument for the realisation of God.

4. Materialism :- "Nature *(Prakriti)* works every thing. There is no need of God *(Purusha)*. The universe functions by the law of cause and effect. Nature is omnipotent."—This is materialism. The Gita denies it. Although the Gita admits the

practical reality of Nature and its workings, it asserts that Nature is subservient to God and borrows its light and life-force from that source Nature has no existence outside the power of the Supreme Lord of the universe. Nature brings forth the whole universe in the immediate presence and by the supreme power of God. So says the Gita. If the universe is a mighty convocation, God is the chairman and Nature is the convener Without the chairman, their is no convocation. God sustains Nature and reveals his power through Nature. (*sutre manigan iva.)*

As the golden thread runs through a necklace of daimonds, even so God is the connecting link between all that exists in the universe. Without the string, the precious stones are scattered at random. Without God, the universe falls to pieces and ceases to exist. "Oh, Arjuna! God (*Kshetri*) illumines the whole universe (*Kshetram*)" From this we understand that the universe is insentient matter (*Jada*) and it is not self-luminous. It appears to shine, but the light is that of God. It appears to move, to create, and to destroy, but all these powers belong to the Supreme Lord. Thus the Gita contradicts the doctrine of the materialists.

Moreover, the five elements that compose the universe are impermanent. To depend on them is to be destroyed along with them. If anybody holds on to a rotating pillar, he turns and tumbles down along with it. There is only One in the universe that is constant and firmly fixed, and that One is *Atman*. (*achaloyam sanatanah*)· "The *Atman* alone does not move. It is the immovable, and the universal." It is the seer and the knower of the whole phenomena of Nature. One who has faith in the *Atman* has no fear of a fall. One who clings to Nature shall go to destruction with it. Who can quench his thirst by running after a mirage? Who can satisfy his hunger by hunting after the fruits of a tree reflected in water? So, the Gita prescribes that the aspirant should hold on to the *Atman* and fulfil the ultimate goal of life. "All things take place in Me (God). It is by Me (God) that everything works."

"I (God) am the father, mother, grandsire, and the controller of the Universe."-says the Lord. Therefore without

depending on anything else, one should take refuge in Him alone. [*mamekam saranam vraja*] "Surrender to me alone." The teacher of the Gita exhorts mankind again and again to give up everything else and surrender to him So the spiritual aspirant should not entertain materialistic thoughts about the reality of the world, but should turn his mind to the One light and One power that is illuminating and moving everything. Thus shall one acquire eternal peace and bliss.

5. Mortification of the body as a form of 'tapasya' :— The body is not our enemy. The real enemies to spiritual realisation are the evil tendencies and predispositions which have taken root in the mind through innumerable births. The body is guiltless. To torture it for realising the spirit is sheer foolishness. Such torture of the body will not remove the bad tendencies. That is why great men practice purification of the mind and sense-organs which are just the instruments of the mind to contact the material world and enjoy its pleasures. If the mind is purified of its evil tendencies, the body becomes an aid to self-realisation. This is real '*tapasya*' and not the torturing of the body. In the seventeenth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna warns the aspirant against it. He says that it is a demonic practice, hostile to the spirit of the *Sastras*, and those who practice it do so for their own pride and glorification.

The teacher of the Gita prescribes three types of *Tapasya* for the body, speech and mind. They should be practised. Occasional fasting and control of the limbs, and such other simple and mild methods to keep the body in a state of health, harmoney, and steadiness, are not prohibited by the Gita. So, according to the teaching of the Gita, the seeker should undertake mild and harmless practices to make the body cooperate with his effort to realise the Self.

6. Mithyacharam (false practice) :—Some people suppress bodily activity, but their mind wanders all over the three worlds, indulging in fantastic thoughts of pleasure and enjoyment. Such uncontrolled activity of the mind is real bondage for mankind.

"Those who suppress the physical organs, but mentally contemplate sense-pleasures, are guilty of false discipline. They

are ignorant and stupid." This is an important directive for the spiritual aspirant. What is needed is to repair and purify the mind-stuff so that it is freed from slavery to worldly temptations and pleasures. When the mind is free, work in the world does not bind man. So, the crucial point is to strive for mental purity, and freedom from lust, greed and hatred. If this is acheieved Self realisation becomes possible immediately. But mere suppression of bodily organs does not lead to the goal. The seeker should bear this in mind in the course of his *Sadhana*, and he should not imagine that he is progressing on the spiritual path, simply because the body is restrained from action. The mind should be filled to the brim with divine thoughts and feelings. This may not be easy in the early stages. But perseverence will ultimately conquer all mental distractions, and the mind comes to rest in the *Atman*. This is the way, and there is no other way.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE FOR THE READER OF THE GITA

I. Q : How could Lord Krishna teach the entire Gita in such a short time ?

A : 1. Lord Krishna is God Himself. There is nothing impossible for Him. He has power to do and undo things. He is the ruler of *Maya*. He worked several miracles to the great wonder of the world. The teaching of the Gita is therefore not an impossibility to the Lord.

2. The battle did not commence immediately after the formation of the two armies. One or two incidents happened. Dharmaraja walked bare-footed towards the enemy army. His brothers followed him. He met Bhishma, Drona, and other elders, and received their blessings and returned. Afterwards, Dharmaraja announced that if there was any one who would wish to surrender to him, he would protect his life. Yuyutsu then came over to the side of the Pandavas. These incidents show that there was some time before the commencement of the battle. It was the first day of the battle, and so certain formalities might have to be gone through, during which time the Lord taught the Gita to Arjuna. There is nothing unnatural in this.

3. It is possible that Lord Krishna might have taught the essential principles of spiritual life, and Veda Vyasa elaborated them in the form of the Gita.

4. According to the moral code of war, no warrior would attack an enemy when the latter drops the weapons, and when he is sunk in sorrow and tears. On both sides, the warriors were high-born heroes, who had a sense of chivalry and fair play. Arjuna dropped the Gandiva (bow) and fell down in the chariot in a mood of despair and sorrow. Would the Kaurava heroes start the attak just then? They might have paused till Arjuna, inspired by the message of the Lord, stood up with his bow in his hand ready for the fight. So there is nothing improbable about the teaching of the Gita on the battle-field.

II. Q: Lord Krishna and Arjuna were intimately associated with each other for a long time. Instead of choosing a peaceful time for his instruction, why did Lord Krishna choose this crisis as the proper moment to communicate his message?

A: 1. Time is an important factor for success in any attempt. This truth holds good in spiritual life. The blacksmith bends the iron rod when it is redhot. The builder constructs the super-structure when the foundation is strongly laid. The physician administers medicine, when there is disease. The peasant sows the seeds when the field is tilled and watered. Similarly, on the battle-field, Arjuna's mind was deeply moved and agitated. He was directly faced with the grand question of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, of life and death. He needed an immediate answer, straight, direct, and convincing, from the Lord. So Lord Krishna chose that moment to enlighten him as to what he should do, and how he should think. Such a situation never occured in the life of Arjuna at any time previously. Not knowing what he should do, Arjuna was perplexed with doubt and appealed to the Lord to teach him wisdom. Such intense emotion, such deep desire for wisdom, such thirst for knowledge, never occured to Arjuna at any time formerly. Lord Krishna knew that it was the most appropriate time to shower spiritual knowledge on his friend and disciple.

2. Life itself is a battle-field. Everyday a battle between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong, is taking place in the heart of every human being This inner conflict in the heart of man is symbolised by the external conflict between the Kauravas and Pandavas. Lord Krishna sides with justice and goodness, and helps to conquer demonic evil and injustice. So, just as Arjuna sought the help of Lord Krishna to know the truth, mankind is constantly searching for truth in the midst of the doubts and troubles of worldly life. The war of the Mahabharata, is symbolic of the conflict between good and evil in the heart of man The Gita offers the necessary light for mankind to know the truth and realise it

III. Q: When there are elders like Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Salya, Dharmaraja, Bhima, and others, why did Lord Krishna select only Arjuna to teach the Gita ?

A : Arjuna was exceptionally qualified to receive the message of the Gita. He was the sage 'Nara' in his former birth. Lord Narayana reincarned himself as Krishna, and Nara as Arjuna.

[pandavanam dhananjayah]

"I am Arjuna among the Pandavas", says the Lord. While the Pandavas were in exile, Arjuna performed great *Tapasya*, pleased Siva, and received the *Pasupatastra*. He could defeat all the Kauravas single-handed in the episode of *Uttaragograhanam*. He is pure. We find him firm and unmoved by the beauty and blandishments of the heavenly damsel Urvasi. Moreover, he is the bosom friend of Lord Krishna from childhood. On the battle-field Arjuna appears as a devotee and disciple of the Lord.

"I am your disciple; command me (what I should do)" says Arjuna.

(bhakto'si me sakha cheti)

"You are a devotee and a friend", says Lord Krishna to Arjuna Since Arjuna was intimately related to the Lord both as a friend and devotee, he was selected as the fittest person to receive the divine message, which contains the most secret *Brahmavidya*

In several other places also, Lord Krishna refers to Arjuna as a devotee and friend. His love for Arjuna was just the response to the deep faith and devotion that Arjuna had for the Lord. The Lord knows the heart of his devotees. Both physically and mentally, Arjuna was strong and pure, and gifted with exceptional talents and powers, and so Lord Krishna chose him as the medium to convey the Gita to all mankind.

IV. Q: The Gita commands Arjuna to fight. Is it not teaching violence?

A: No. The Gita does not teach violence. On the other hand, non-injury *(Ahimsa)* is strongly recommended as one of the first virtues of the spiritual aspirant.

The spirit of the Gita should be properly understood and interpreted. We should consider, under what circumstances, for what purpose, with what aim, Lord Krishna commanded Arjuna to fight. If we do so, the doubt would not arise. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* has very subtle meaning and application to the practical affairs of life. Arjuna was a Kshatriya, a King. To maintain peace and order in the kingdom is his duty. For this purpose, he should suppress the wicked and defend the good. By doing so, he would establish peace and security in the country. Lord Krishna came down to the earth as an *Avatar* for the same purpose.

Those who indulge in wicked anti-social activities, who are traitors to the nation should be punished. Otherwise the land would be plunged in chaos and disorder, and the law of the jungle would prevail. Might would be right, and no man's life would be safe. If the canker worm is not destroyed in time, it would destroy the whole tree. The cancerous growth should be operated and the poison removed from the body, so that the entire organism might not decay and die. To operate the cancer is not violence. Anti-social elements who try to subvert peace and order should be eliminated. This is not violence. Dacoits and murderers should be caught and punished. That is the work of the police This is not violence.

The wicked behaviour of the Kauravas deserved punishment and punishment overtook them through the war. They

tried all the evil methods to destroy the Pandavas. They used poison and incendiarism. They violated the modesty and honour of their wife Draupadi. They deprived them of their share of the kingdom. They declined all offers of peace and goodwill. There was no alternative left for the Pandavas except to punish them on the battle-field. So the war was not act of violence, but a righteous struggle for establishing justice in the world.

In this way, war became an inevitable sequence to the innumerable acts of evil committed by the Kauravas. The Pandavas had to face it, in accordance with the moral code of the Kshatriyas. Lord Krishna commanded what was *Dharma* under these special circumstances Violence and non-violence should be understood and interpretted very correctly. One should go deep into the heart of things to know and decide what is violence and what is non-violence. He should not be deceived by slogans and cheap propoganda about *Ahimsa*. The Gita does not teach hatred. It does not teach violence. On the other hand, it emphasises kindness and compassion, friendship and love. Hatred is condemned as the worst enemy of man. The Gita teaches universal love and benevolence.

But the Gita never admits weakness and surrender to the forces of evil, however mighty they might be. The Gita exhorts every one to stand up and fight injustice. The man who engages himself in the task of defending a righteous cause should do so by surrendering the fruits of his action to God, and work as an instrument in the hands of God. The sentence of death passed on a criminal by a judge is not an act of violence. Even so, the righteous war undertaken by the Pandavas could by no means be discribed as violence, although blood was shed profusely and lives were lost in great numbers. The spirit of the great book is to lead man to a realisation of the Supreme Self through the process of righteous action with complete faith in God, and perfect surrender to His will.

GITA AND YOGAVASISHTA

We shall now consider some points of similarity between the Gita and Yogavasishta. The latter is an authoritative work of religious philosophy, highly popular like the Gita. It is of

very ancient origin. In the Treta yuga, Maharshi Valmiki wrote the mighty work which contains thirty two thousand verses. Here are some points of comparision.

1. As Lord Krishna taught the Gita to Arjuna, Maharshi Vasishta explained the secret of religion and philosophy to Sri Rama. Therefore the dialogue form is adopted in both the works.

2. Arjuna was filled with a feeling of disillusionment about the greatness and grandeur of worldly life. He was beset with doubt as to his duty on the battle-field. Lord Krishna teaches him the way of righteousness and *Dharma*, and commads him to fight the battle. In the same way, Sri Rama, when he was a boy of only sixteen years, saw the impermanence of human life, and had a feeling of renunciation, resulting in inaction. Vasishta, the *Guru* of the royal family, taught Sri Rama the secret of *yoga* and the way of righteous life and work in the world.

3. Just as Arjuna was awakened from the delusion of ignorance by the divine call of Krishna, even so Sri Rama was inspired by the sublime spiritual teaching of his *Guru* and carried out his prescribed duties as a king and house-holder.

4. Yogavasishta belongs to the Treta yuga; the Gita to the closing period of Dwapara yuga. About two yugas intervened between the two great works. But astonishingly, in the Yogavasishta there are references to the Gita. In the Nirvanaprakaranam of the book, the episode of Arjuna is included, and the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna is presented comprehensively. Some verses of the Gita are recorded verbatim in the Yogavasishta. How wonderful! How can we describe the vision of Vasishta for whom time as a whole reveals the past, present, and future as one complete whole! It is a proof of the importance of the Gita that it found its proper place in that great work.

HOW THE GITA HELPS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Hundreds of books are coming out everyday—novels, stories, plays, critical and research works in literature and science and other subjects. People read them once or twice and put them away. But there is one book which they usually consult

everyday and that is the dictionary. The Bhagawadgita is like a dictionary of life, as it explains the meaning of life, its purpose, and method of work in the world. The physician consults the 'materia-medic' everyday as he comes across problematic diseases and finds new remedies for them. Likewise, it is necessary for man who is subject to the disease of earthly life to consult the Gita at every turn. All the problems of the human personality are mentioned in it, and the cure suggested in clear terms. The Gita is not etherial philosophy, but a direct interpretation of life in all its aspects. Man is confronted with doubts and difficulties, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. All such doubts and difficulties are stated in the Gita, and they are all cleared finally. The reader is not left in doubt about any problem of life. We shall see how the Gita helps people in everyday life

1. When people are angry :— Anger is a wave of the mind. It starts like a ripple at first, gathers force and becomes a whirlwind, and then develops into a storm. It is then uncontrollable, and man is plunged into darkness and death.

"By anger man is deluded; by delusion he loses memory of what he really is; by the loss of memory, the power of discrimination is lost; when *Buddhi* is lost, man is destroyed." Thus the teacher of the Gita warns mankind against anger and hatred. Man degrades himself to the level of a demon by yielding to anger and hatred. Anger is like alcohol and there is practically no difference between the drunkard and the wrathful man. They forget themselves, and lose the power to distinguish between the right and wrong. Great harm is done to society by this dangerous passion. Hatred is born of *Rajas*. The man who is overcome by it can never enjoy rest or peace.

(rajcsastu phalam dukham)

"The fruit of *Rajas* is pain and suffering." So says Lord Krishna; "Hatred and harshness are demonic qualities." They ruin not only those who entertain them but all those against whom they are directed. Like a bad guest who should be turned out before he could do any harm to our home, such passions should not be allowed to enter the heart. The Gita-teaching should be remembered and thought of at all times, particularly at the time when people foresee the rising of this passion, and their faith in the Lord would certainly help them to destroy it even at the source.

2. When people are tempted by worldly pleasures :— Vasishta says in the Yogavasishta— *(bhogah bhavamaharogah)* "Enjoyments are great disease of life."

Lord Krishna repeats in the Gita—

(bhogah duhkhayonaya evate)

"Enjoyments are the cause and source of pain and sorrow." Men of experience have expressed the same view. The *Sastras*, *Upanishads* have declared the same truth. Inspite of it, by the compelling force of past tendencies, men run after sensual pleasures which have no more substance in them than water in a mirage. Men do not think and so these enjoyments appear to have a relish and taste for the vast majority of people. Their attraction is false, and they do not have real beauty or truth in them. If they have, they should give complete satisfaction, and everlasting joy, and peace. But no man, however abundant and plentiful his enjoyments might be, has ever declared that he is peaceful or happy. "Sense enjoyments contain a drop of happiness accompanied by Himalayam pain and sorrow." Therefore the Gita warns the aspirant to give up temptation for worldly enjoyment, and to seek for that peace and joy of the spirit which is untainted by sense-objects and which is therefore pure and eternal. Those who desire enjoyments are mentally distracted and so they cannot reach the state of ecstatic concentration. Moreover—"These enjoyments which result from the union of the senses with the sense-objects are themselves the source of pain and sorrow. They begin and end, and are short-lived. Wise men do not relish them." Not only this, Lord Krishna makes it clear that real joy comes from within, and not from external objects; and that joy is eternal. The rejection of sense-pleasures is further evidenced by the following statements in the Gita.

"The aspirant should have dispassion towards the objects of sence-enjoyment."

"Sense objects should be given up—" "Men of demonic nature consider sense-enjoyment as the ultimate goal of life.

Such men are cast into Hell." "Man frreed from the desire of sensual pleasures, attains liberation."

Thus the Gita teaches renunciation of bodily pleasures in a hundred ways. Whenever the seeker feels tempted by sense-enjoyment, he should recall the teaching of the Gita again and again, and courageously turn away from them. There is no other way. It would be inspiring to feel that Lord Krishna is himself before us, guiding and helping us to overcome all temptations of earthly life.

3. When there is fear of death :— The fear of death is common to all living-beings. The learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high-born and the low, are all equally struck with the fear of death. The Gita explains what death is, and why it is ridiculous to fear it. Death means separation from the body. If man is the body, fear of losing it may be explicable. But in reality, man is not and cannot be the body. The real man is not a composition of the five elements. He is truly the eternal *Sachithananda*. No one grieves when torn clothes are removed and thrown off. Even so when the body deteriorates and falls, the thoughtful man does not grieve, because he knows well that he is the witness to the modifications of the body.

Oh Arjuna! You and I and these kings here are the One eternal reality. We existed formerly and we shall exist in future." So says the Lord and thus teaches the *Mahavakya* 'Thou art That' to Arjuna, and inspires tremendous courage in them. Whenever there is the fear of death, let every man remember the magnificant and powerful exhortation of the Lord, and there is absolutely no doubt the fear is dispelled immediately. "The *Atman* (the real man) is indestructable. It cannot be cut or burnt or dried up or dissolved. It is immortal and universal. It exists for ever." "Oh, Arjuna! the *Atman*, the dweller in the body, cannot be destroyed, when the body falls. This is true of every individual. Therefore thou shalt not grieve for anyone." "The *Atman* is never born. It never dies. It is not one who did not exist in the past, present, or future. It is the unborn, the everlasting, and the ancient. Though the body dies, it is free from death."

Thus the immortality of the real man is affirmed through innumerable declarations in the Gita. As one reads them, thinks of them, understands them again and again, the fear of death is gone for ever. One should persistently assert—"I am not the body; I am the spirit dwelling in the body; I am not the *kshetra*; I am the *kshetrajna*; I am not the three *Gunas*; I am the transcendental Being." Continuous adherence to this truth is the way to overcome the fear of death. From time immemorial, man has so identified himself with the body, that he is unable to think that he is anything other than the body. Now he has to dehypnotise himself from this delusion and know that he is, and he was, nothing else but the *Atman*. This is the command of the Gita. There is no death for the real man.

4. When people are troubled by sensual desires — *Kama* (lust) is the foremost opposing force to the seeker. *Kama* is the leader of the opposition. It is he who first breaks into the heart of man to rob the jewel of *Jnana*. With him enter his aids—hatred, greed and the whole battalion of evil forces. This *kama* is described as *(Jnanino nityavairina)* 'the eternal enemy of the *Jnani*–' Again, *kama* is like fire which is never subdued by offerings poured into it. The teacher of the Gita constantly warns the aspirant against it. If man is weak and careless about it, he can never hope to scale the heights of spirituality. Therefore he should keep the Lord's teachings as a permanent sentinel guarding the gateway of his heart against this most wile and dangerous enemy.

As man contemplates worldly objects, desire for them is born. And this desire leads to all consequential evils which end in man's destruction. Therefore one should try to examine and discriminate and understand how worthless and short-lived these material pleasures are, and never allow them to enter the heart. Even when they creep into the mind secretly; the seeker should throw the enemy out at once before he could again a foothold in his territory.

"He who, even before the body falls, is able to check the force of *kama* (lust) and *krodha* (anger), is the man free and happy. So, as soon as the seeker feels the touch of *kama*, he should become alert, and realising full-well that it is the

most dangerous enemy, he should detach himself from its grip in every possible way. "Lust, hatred and greed are the open gateways to Hell. They destroy man. Give them up." What a clear warning ! Let people hear the warning of the Lord at all times.

The terrible enemy *kama* should be conquered. The seeker should not in any way underestimate the strength of the enemy. Through many births, he has acquired power and resources, and fortified his position in the heart of man. To destroy this fortification, and pull out the enemy, and destroy him, one would require the most determined effort. Half-hearted measures would not be of any avail. Powerful weapons should be used. The declarations of the Lord in the Gita, the truths enunciated in the Upanishads and the *Sastras* are the arsenal from which the seeker could draw weapons of atomic power to erase the fortifications of the enemy and destroy him. It is not enough to defeat the enemy once. He would knock at the gate again at an opportune moment. He should be destroyed, burnt to ashes, so that he might never sneak into the heart at any time, under any guise, and in any form. Thus the Gita helps the seeker to overcome the greatest obstacle to Self-realisation.

5. How to overcome envy and hatred of others :- Though the world appears to be diversified by separate individuals and objects, in reality it is One In the wave, the bubble, and the foam, there is the same water as the substratum. Even so, through all the diversities of creation, the same unbroken consciousness pervades. Where then is envy? Where is hatred of others? Who are the others, different from the Self ? "Where is delusion, where is sorrow for the man who sees the One every where ?" The Gita emphasises this Oneness in many places. "He is the best of men who is equal to friend and foe, to the good and bad." Moreover the Gita insists on love and kindness towards all creatures.

(adveshta sarvabhutanam)

Higher than this, the Gita wants that one should see others as his own Self. The *Atman*, the all-pervading substratum is the same in all. The difference is only in the name and form.

So when one hates others, he is hating his own self. Harming others is injury to one's own self. This is the truth. To have faith in the declarations of Lord Krishna is the surest way to keep away all uncharitable thoughts, feelings and actions.

6. How to overcome the pride of power and property :— In the vastness of this mighty and infinite universe, what after all is the place of the earth? A mere dot or less than that. What then is the position of a country, and in that, the place of man's so called prosperity—his lands and houses, his estates and empires? Practically nothing. Let us contemplate for once the unlimited glory of God Almighty. Even the most powerful imagination of the greatest poet would stagger and fail to think of the endless universe and the mysterious power that pervades it. Could any man rational and thoughtful feel proud of his place and possessions in the face of this stupendous universe and the power behind it?

"I pervade the whole universe with only one of my aspects," declares the Lord in the Vibhuti yoga of the Gita. How mighty and unfathomable is the Lord's power! The whole universe forms only a part of him! Before this all-pervading glory and power of the Lord, what is man's position and possessions? What are his enjoyments? When we think of this, we are struck with the littleness of man, and his hollow pretensions and protestations of pride and egotism. When Arjuna appealed to the Lord to see his universal form, the Lord told him that he could not see it with the mortal eyes. So the Lord offered Divine Vision to Arjuna. He saw. The Vision was tramendous. Arjuna bows to the Lord, but how, for the Lord is everywhere? "I bow to you, before and behind, and all around." But Arjuna could not see the mighty form for long. He trembled with dismay and amazement, and wished to see the normal figure of Lord Krishna. How wonderful ! Let the proud and egoistic people turn over these pages of the eleventh chapter of the Gita often and often, and they shall be rid of the demon of egotism. They shall then be humble. True humility would come to them The Lord does everything. Arjuna is only an instrument.

If we examine things carefully, we find that whatever is seen is subject to destruction. What is born, dies. That is what the Gita says. All the worlds upto Brahmaloka come and go in a cycle. That is, they take birth, and so they end, in time. Only the Supreme is eternal. And that state alone is everlasting. When the glories of all the worlds are after all short-lived and useless, why should man feel proud of his worthless possessions of this earth? When greater beings in the higher worlds are themselves subject to death and disappear into nothingness, why should man alone have a bloated and inflated ego? Let man see clearly what he is in the vastness of the universe. Then he would know his littleness as a separate individual. He would then enquire into his real nature. Through enquiry he would acquire knowledge of his real self. Such knowledge would unite him with the Supreme Reality.

In this manner, the Gita offers strong remedy to the many weaknesses of human nature. It is certainly best to foresee and prevent disease. In spiritual *sadhana*, this is far more important. To eliminate desires even at the source is far easier than to remove them after they take root in the heart. However, if that were not possible, it is good to discover the disease as soon as it appears, and apply the strongest cure to root it out immediately. Otherwise the disease becomes chronic and incurable. The spiritual aspirant should be extremely vigilent and watchful. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. This is absolutely true in the spiritual realm. The Gita not only purifies the mental atmosphere, but acts like an invigorating and life-giving tonic to reinforce the resistence-power of the seeker, and thus enables him to transcend all the difficulties in his way. May the whole of mankind benefit by its study, and experience untainted peace and bliss.

OUR DUTY

Thus far we have considered some of the prominent features of the Gita. In fact there can be no end as we proceed in this line. It is impossible even for the thousand-hooded Adisesha to exhaust all the merits of the Gita. So for the present, let us be content with these few aspects which we have touched. It is said that the simple daily recitation of the Gita confers religious merit, and the daily practice of the Gita gives

Moksha. So, let one move forward from study to practice. One should aim at freeing himself from the bondage of earthly life, with its endless chain of birth and death, with all its innumerable causes of pain and sorrow and suffering. This is one's duty. The aspirant should feel grateful that he has such great books like the Gita to inspire and guide him. Sri Sankaracharya says that there are three things which God's grace alone could confer on mankind—firstly, the human birth; secondly, the desire for liberation; and thirdly, the protection and guidance of a realised soul. The aspirants have all these benefits now. They are rational human beings. They aspire to know the truth. They have the word of God (Gita) to protect and guide them. Blessed are those who could serve the Lord and practise his teaching, before the body falls. Let not this wonderful opportunity be lost through ignorance and neglect. The human body is a rare gift. It may not come to man again till after many births. Sankara says that the human birth is the reward for the good done through countless number of births. Otherwise it is impossible to attain it.

Hence there is the immediate urgency to work for the highest goal here and now. When one has good health, when there are good opportunities, when he is young and energetic, in the spring time of life, let him take refuge with the Gita and such other great works, and rise higher and higher towards the goal. Let him cultivate devotion, practise dispassion, acquire knowledge, and break up the shackles of delusion and sorrow which keeps him bound on the rack of earthly life. "Here (i.e.) in this very life, man should realise his Self" is the injunction of the Lord. The Lord knows that if this opportunity is lost, it may not come to him till after many births. Out of compassion, the Lord exhorts mankind to realise the extraordinary importance of this life, and to complete the work for which he has come.

Do people not satisfy the demands of the body with regular food and sleep every day? Similarly, let them undertake the study of the Gita as a daily duty—the Gita which is the very essence of the *Sastras* and the Upanishadas. Let them find delight in the contemplation of these truths enunciated by the

Lord for the benefit of mankind. Let them begin here and now. Whatever might have been the past, whatever the future might hold in store, let them make a fresh start on this beautiful path illumined by the love and compassion of the Supreme Lord. Arjuna gave up the reins of his chariot into the hands of the Lord and fought the battle free from all cares and anxieties. So let one hand-over the reins of his life's chariot to the Lord, and work without the feeling of doership, and in the spirit that he is but the instrument of the Lord in this great mundane drama. For such a man, there is no bondage. There is no pain and grief. The Lord himself would guide the chariot to its proper destination.

Let us imagine ourselves to be Arjuna, and feel the Lord's presence as our guide, philosopher, and friend. To picture ourselves as Arjuna receiving the divine message directly from the lips of the Lord would be the surest way to realise its meaning and significance fully, and transcend all the difficulties and temptations that arise in this life. It leads to the highest spiritual experience.

PROPOGATING THE GITA

Man's work is not over by his own realisation It is the universal *Dharma* for such a man to help others to realise the Self. Having crossed the ocean of *samsara*, he should help others to do so. He should share his divine bliss with others. He has taken refuge in the Gita, has purified his mind, and has realised the bliss of *Atma Jnana*, and all this he should communicate to others. Many are sunk in the pit of *Samsara*, and are suffering by pain and sorrow. They know not the way out. Distracted by the temtpations of life, they wander about without rest or peace. The realised man has a duty to discharge towards them. Who else can save them ? The *Jnani* alone could do it. By his own effort, he has lighted up his heart with the lamp of the Gita. He alone has the power to enlighten others. He has practised the Gita-teaching, and he should help others to practise it. This is *Jnana Dana*. It is far greater than any other *Dana* (charity). This is *Jnanayajna*, and it is far higher than any other *Yajna*. So besides studying the Gita, he should propogate its study as best as he could. At the end of the Gita, Lord Krishna says that he, who, having learnt the Gita, teaches it to others, is

the most dear to him— So it follows that the Lord not only approves but values the propogation of the Gita in the world as a precious act of devotion to him Why not then do the work which is dear to the Lord ? It is certainly good to reform oneself and then to reform others. It is better to form Gita-Sanghams in every village and town and city and disseminate the Gita-message to the people at large. Young students in schools and colleges should be initiated into the powerful teaching of the Gita. May the sounds of the Gita reverberate in every household. May the divine melody of the Gita ravish the heart of mankind and draw them on to the bliss of God-realisation. Where the Gita is, there the Lord dwells, undoubtedly. Where the Lord is, there is Victory, prosperity, and *Dharma*. So every one should study and practice the Gita. Every one should try to widen the field of its influence to the extent that is possible for him. The heart shall yield the richest harvest when watered and sown by the sacred waters of the Gita and its immortal message.

CONCLUSION

The Gita is directly the manifestation of the Lord. Service to the Gita is service to the Lord. The study of the Gita is the sacred *Japa* of the Lord. Each verse of the Gita is *Narayana-Mahamantra*. A parrot made of sugar tastes sweet in every part of it. So the Gita is filled with divine bliss in every verse, word and phrase. The Gita embodies the highest *Dharma*. It is the finest fruit of the tree of *Dharma*. What is the cause of its wonderful power? Evidently, the teacher of the Gita is God himself, endowed with all the sixteen aspects of illumination. The propounders of other religions have claimed different relationships with God. One has declared himself as the son of God; another as the prophet of God; another as the messenger of God; yet another, as the servant of God. But the teacher of the Gita proclaims that he is God himself So the Gita is directly the word of God. It is not something communicated through an intermediary. This explains its tremendous power. Arjuna's ignorance is removed even before half the teaching is over

The name Gita has a wonderful meaning. 'Gi' means that which is sung; 'ta' means that which helps to cross (the

ocean of *Samsara*. Like the *Kalpavriksha*, it helps those who seek for its protection. It is the eye for the blind; the feet for the lame; strength for the weak; shower of rain to quench the fire of pain and sorrow. It transforms the ignorant into the wise; the timid man into a hero; the dying man into an immortal It is the highest form of wealth for mankind. It leads every man gently step by step till he reaches the summit of God-realisation It purifies the heart. It sets right all crookedness. It awakens the dorment powers in man. It brings out the inherent divine light in the heart of man.

The Gita is the holy Triveni where the three streams of *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* meet. Blessed are those who take a bath in this holy Triveni. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana* cannot be separated from one another. They are interrelated. According to previous tendencies, the seeker may follow one of them as the main path, but the others have their part to play. Those who are not conscious of this union, are likely to urge the superiority of their own path over the others. The Gita harmonised all the divergent elements by declaring that transcending the ego, and renunciation of individual self are the main objectives of spiritual life.

Though the Gita has several commentaries, the life of Lord Krishna is itself the great commentary on the Gita. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana*, and *Jnana* find their proper place in his life. He is an adept in *Nishkamakarma*. He rules the three worlds with the knowledge of the Gita. He is intensely active and at the same time in a state of perfect rest and peace. This is the greatest teaching of the Gita. He is also a *Bhakta*. To his *Guru* Sandipa and other elders, he is devoted and respectful. In the *Rajasuyayaga* performed by Dharmaraja, he washed the feet of the elders and showed his humility and devotion to them. He is the Lord of *Yoga*. He is the very embodiment of *Jnana*. He taught *Yoga* to the Sun God in the past. So the life of Lord Krishna is a direct example for the aspirants who follow the teaching of the Gita. Let everyone absorb and assimilate the teaching of the Gita in his everyday life, and transform his earthly life, into divine life, full to the brim with *Sachithananda*. This is the goal of life. This is the message of the Gita.

One important principle of the Gita is that no one should be forced to accept its teaching. After delivering the whole teaching, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna,—

"Having considered the Gita Sastra, do as you like." The disciple is not compelled to accept the teaching. He is free to choose his line of thought and action. Only, Lord Krishna wants Arjuna to consider the teaching deeply and critically. But the final decision is to be taken by the devotee. "I have told you what is *Dharma*. I have shown you the pitfalls and elevations of life. I have pointed out the distinction between good and bad, between bondage and freedom, between life and death, between ignorance and knowledge. You may think well and act in your own way." This is what the Lord says to Arjuna. Great men teach the highest wisdom, but the responsibility for accepting or rejecting it rests on the disciple, and not on the *Guru*. Of course the thoughtful disciple would certainly accept the higher teaching and follow it. Arjuna did likewise. His ignorance was removed in a trice.

Each soul is potentially divine. But as the mind is impure, man is unable to see that truth as it is. For mental purification, one should engage himself in selfless action (*Nishkamakarma*). If one does his prescribed duty without a feeling of doership, if he gives up the fruits of work to God, the mind becomes pure. The light of *Atman* then reflects clearly in the pure mind, like the reflection in a pure mirror. If the mirror is impure and stained, the reflection is distorted and broken up. This is not the fault of the man standing before the mirror. The reflector is imperfect. Even so, the *Atman* is always the same. But the reflecting mind being impure (i.e. tainted with desires, likes and dislikes, people are unable to visualise the reality as it is. The individual *Jiva* cannot overcome *Maya* by his own effort. He should seek for the Grace of God who is the ruler of *Maya*. He should therefore take refuge at the feet of the Lord and *Guru*. Thus *Bhakti* plays its part in spiritual life. *Japa*, Worship, singing the name of the Lord, and such other practices of devotion should be followed by the aspirant.

Whoever worships the Supreme Lord, he receives the grace by which he becomes one with God God himself confers

on the devotee the *Buddhiyoga* which enables him to realise the truth. In this manner, *Karma*, *Bhakti*, and *Jnana* follow one another in a natural order. But the aspirant should be watchful always. One may light the lamp in the house. But if he keeps the windows open, gusts of wind might put out the light. Even so, the lamp of knowledge may be disturbed and puffed out by sensual impulses from within and sense-objects from without, coming in through the open windows of the five senses. Therefore the control of the senses and dispassion towards worldly objects should be cultivated. Otherwise all the efforts to acquire *Jnana* would be futile.

The Lord reminds the *sadhaka* (aspirant) about self-control time and again in the course of his teaching. Even from the starting point of spiritual life, control of the senses is prescribed as an essential condition, and it is to be continued till the goal is reached and one becomes firmly rooted in the Self. To control the mind and senses is *Raja yoga*. The impurity of the mind (*Mala*) and the outgoing tendency of the mind (*Vikshepa*) should be controlled first, and then enquiry into the Self becomes spontaneous and unbroken. Having put to himself the basic question 'Who am I?', the seeker should carry on the enquiry by rejecting the five sheaths (*Annamayakosa*, *Pranamayakosa*, *Manomayakosa*, *Vijnanamayakosa*, and *Anandamayakosa*) one after another, till he arrives at the very source of his being, and then the veil covering the Reality (*avarana*) is thrown off and the *kshetrajna* manifests in one's heart as the supreme unviersal consciousness. Just as the Sun shines directly when the covering cloud moves off, even so, when the veil of ignorance drops off, the inner Light shines forth in all its purity and glory. This is the essence of the Gita. To attain this goal even in this birth should be the aim of every student of the Gita.

Of course there is no prescribed time for the study of the Gita. But to purify the body early in the morning, and sit down calmly in a clean spot for the study is the traditional method. Internal purity should be sustained by external purity of body and the environment. In a peaceful and pure spot meditation on the Gita would be easy and the mind gets into tune with its sublime teaching. Hence the seeker should select some undisturbed

place in the house or elsewhere for spiritual practice. One chapter or more of Gita as the seeker feels inclined, may be taken up for the purpose of *Gita-parayana*. After completing the *Parayana*, one or two verses of Gita Mahatmya should be read without fail.

Mere recitation of the Gita does confer religious merit. But that is not enough. The seeker should try to understand the meaning and significance of the text by a sure and slow process. As he contemplates the meaning the mind is gradually purified. There are likely to occur some doubts or apparent contradictions. These should be cleared by a closer scrutiny of the context in which they occur. Here is an illustration. "Men think, feel, and act according to their previous tendencies *(Prakriti)*. How can there be control ?" A statement like this is likely to mislead the unwary reader into thinking that the Lord is discouraging the practice of self-control as useless and impossible. It is not so. It is intended only to emphasise the strength of the tendencies which each man has to encounter in his struggle for spiritual freedom, and not to disparage the practice of self-control. For, in the very next verse, he asserts—

"The senses have developed attraction and repulsion towards the objects of the wolrd. They are the enemies of man. He should not yield to them." Here the Lord commands self-control. So the reader has to pause at every verse and try to understand its meaning in relation to other ideas expressed elsewhere in the text. Then he would get a synthetic and harmonised view of the entire teaching.

There is the greatest need for the propogation of the Gita in modern times. Great are the temptations of modern life, and the emphasis on material comforts. People are under the illusion that the acquisition of worldy comforts is the sumum bonum of man's aspirations. Few men think rationally

on the real meaning of human life, and man's ultimate destiny. The Gita has the special merit of arguing out the whole case of man's existence and duty in this life, and his ultimate position in the scheme of things. The Gita does not evidently deny the world of action. Arjuna was commanded to act. The Gita shows how to act in this world (i.e.), the method of action, the motive and spirit behind action. On the other side, the Gita reveals the essential oneness of man with the Supreme Being. This harmonisation of the world of action, the so-called practical world, and the spiritual ideal, is the merit of the Gita. The pleasures of earthly life are shortlived. The thoughtful man naturally seeks for purer and everlasting bliss, which can only be obtained by Self-realisation. The Gita, like a mother, exhorts all her children to know where and how they could obtain real and permanent joy. Let people listen to her words with love and reverence, and let them crown themselves on the throne of *Atmasamrajya.*

The question may arise as to what may be done by the vast masses of illiterate men who do not know how to read or write. They cannot be left out of their share of the universal benevelence of the Lord. The Lord speaks of them also! Out of his compassion, he shows the way to overcome the handicap. No one should be excluded from the universal blessing of the Gita. Those who are illiterate and who do not know anything of religion or philosophy, but who try to learn the teaching of the Gita from others, they too transcend death by their faith and devotion. Of course, to be able to read and understand is good. But he who has not this advantage need not feel frustrated. He can listen to the teaching of the Gita, gradually understand it, and get a firm grip over it. 'Free from evil, he who hears the Gita becomes free; and as a reward for the merit acquired, obtains enjoyment in the higher Worlds.' In this connection, one recalls to his mind how Mahatma Gandhi advised every one to learn Sanskrit so that he might study and understand the

Gita. The trouble taken to learn the language is nothing compared to the reward of wisdom and bliss that one gets from a study of the Gita.

The physician administers medicine to the patient. But his duty does not end there. He meets the patient from time to time and enquires if the medicine is efficious and the disease cured. Lord Krishna, the great physician of life's disease, after teaching Arjuna, asks him how he thinks and fells. With strength and courage, Arjuna replies—"My delusion is destroyed". He bows to the Lord with profound reverence The Lord's medicine worked wonderfully on Arjuna. In the same way, we find Sanjaya who, having heard the Gita, is beside himself with ecstatic joy—

"Again and again, and once again, I (Sanjaya) feel delighted." The absence of sorrow and a positive experience of pure joy are the effects of *Brahma-Jnana*. Both Arjuna and Sanjaya experienced that state one after another. Why then should one doubt the efficacy of the Gita to give him the same peace and joy? Undoubtedly, all those who follow the Gita teaching would attain liberation. Only faith and diligence are necessary.

Thus the Gita offers the blessing of peace not only to Arjuna and Sanjaya, but also to all human beings. When the magnificent tree of the Gita is affording delightful shelter, and offering fruits of the sweetest taste, why should one wander about in the burning desert sands of earthly life, suffering horrible torments of mind and body? Why should he not move atonce into the sheltering shade of the Gita and taste the fruits of peace and joy? Why should he not drink deep the 'Gita-Makaranda' and experience the highest bliss? Why should he not perform *Jnanayajna* by a study of the Gita and attain liberation? The wind of God's grace is constantly blowing. People should not be lazy sailors on the sea of life. Let them unfurl the sails of their boat to the friendly breeze and reach

the heaven of peace quickly. The mighty thought currents of the great *Rishis* of yore are always circulating in the world. Let people attune themselves to those vital forces, and strengthen and purify their minds to know the truth and be firmly fixed in it. May Gita become the worthy possession of every man. May the shackles of sorrow and delusion be broken up by the knowledge of the Gita. Watered by the shower of nectar from the Gita, may the wide field of man's heart produce the richest harvest of *Nirvana.* May the trumpet-call of the Gita rouse slumbering humanity from the sleep of ignorance. May mankind purify themselves from the evils of *Samsara* by a bath in the sacred stream of the Gita. By the Grace of God, and by the experience of the Gita-teaching, may all people fulfil their life's purpose and attain the supreme peace and bliss of *Brahma Jnana.*

Om

Sri Krishnarpanamastu

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ प्रथमोऽध्यायः

Atha Prathamodhyayah

FIRST DISCOURSE

अर्जुनविषादयोगः

ARJUNA VISHADA YOGA

THE YOGA OF THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

The Title of the Discourse :

The title Arjuna Vishada Yoga may appear peculiar. *Yoga* means union of the *Jiva* with *Paramatma.* The path leading to the union is also called *Yoga.* Since different paths are followed by different aspirants to attain that goal, each path is also called *Yoga* — like *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Dhyana Yoga (Atma Samyama Yoga,)* and *Jnana Yoga*. But one may ask, "is the grief of Arjuna also a *Yoga?* How can desponpency be *Yoga?*" Evidently, sorrow for losses and bereavements in worldly life, for not acquiring material wealth, prosperity or position, cannot be called *Yoga.* But sorrow for wordly objects should be distinguished from the intense grief and despondency felt by an aspirant for his ignorance of Truth and *Dharma.* Such divine discontent with the mundane world is the starting point of the effort to know the Truth and throw off the burden of earthly existence. The true seeker cries out in utter agony of spirit — "Let me have light; let me know the truth; life is not worth-living without knowing what is *Dharma*; the world is awful and perplexing; What is the will of God? How should I act ?" Thus was the mind of Arjuna unsettled and frustrated with doubt, and he yearned intensely to know the truth, and transcend the evils of life as he saw them in the crisis in which he

was placed. Therefore the grief of Arjuna is *Yoga*. He was prepared to give up everything, the kingdom and all royal pleasures, and his heart yearned to know what is *Dharma* and live up to it. This state of mind is necessary for all seekers. Out of such intense yearning of heart comes knowledge, slowly but surely. Arjuna realised his *Dharma* and attained true knowledge at the end. So this Discourse is entitled Arjuna Vishada Yoga.

Important points of the Discourse

1.	Description of the warriors of the two armies.	1 to 11 verses.
2.	Conch sounds of the two armies.	12 to 19 ,,
3.	Arjuna surveys the armies.	20 to 27 ,,
4	The despondency of Arjuna.	28 to 47 ,,

How this Discourse is related to the preceeding story:— Ten days elapsed after the battle began. Bhishma fell. Sanjaya communicated that incident to Dhritarashtra. Then the blind king asks Sanjaya to tell him the whole story of the battle from the beginning. Sanjaya gives a vivid account of all the incidents, how the two armies met on the holy plain of Kurukshetra, and how Lord Krishna gave the divine message to Arjuna. This is the Gita Sastra.

1· Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya about the battle:

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय ॥ १

Dhritarashtra uvacha

Dharmakshetre kurukshetre samaveta yuyustsavah ।
Mamakah pandavaschaiva kimakurvata sanjaya ॥

Meaning: धृतराष्ट्र उवाच *dhritarashtra uvacha*: Dhritarashtra said, संजय *Sanjaya*: O Sanjaya! धर्मक्षेत्रे *dharmakshetre*: on the holy plain, कुरुक्षेत्रे *kurukshetre*: in kurukshetra, युयुत्सवः *yuyutsavah*: desirous to fight, समवेताः *samavetah*: assembled,

मामकाः *mamakah*: my people, पाण्डवाश्चैव *pandavaschaiva*: and also the sons of pandu, किम् *kim*: what, अकुर्वत *akurvata*: did do?

Substance: Dhritarashtra said — Having assembled on the holy plain in Kurukshetra desirous of fighting the battle, what did my people and the Pandavas do? O Sanjaya!

Commentary: The Gita begins with the word *Dharma*. It is an auspicious word. By using it first, Veda Vyasa gives an auspicious opening to his great work. The Lord is the embodiment of *Dharma*. Reverence for *Dharma* is worship of the Lord himself, by the utterence of his name. The aim of the Gita and its main teaching are determind by the very first word. It is *Dharma*. The lord incarnates himself from time to time to establish *Dharma*.

Dhritarashtra: The word means one who holds a kingdom. He who appropriates to himself a kingdom which is not his, is Dhritarashtra. The word has an inner meaning. The real man has nothing to do with the kingdom of the body, senses and mind. These are all objects perceived by the real man who is the seer. The body and the world are objects seen. But the ignorant man considers the body to be himself, and develops attachment and egotism in relation to the world. Therefore every ignorant man is a Dhritarashtra. To remove the blindness of ignorance by the light of the Gita is the duty of every individual.

Kurukshetra: It is a holy plain which lies in Punjab, South of Ambala and North of Delhi. In the 87th Chapter of *Vanaparva* and the 56th Chapter of *Salyaparva*, the greatness of Kurukshetra is vividly described. In former *yugas* Brahma, Indra, and Agni performed *tapas* in that sacred place. Emperor Kuru, the ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, ploughed the holy plain, and so it is called Kurukshetra. Indra offered a boon to Kuru that anyone who performed *tapas* or left his mortal body there would ascend to higher realms of existence. Parasurama offered oblations to his ancestors there. Many great and holy men performed meritorious acts of *Dharma* in that place, and so it is called *Dharma Kshetra*.

It is quite possible that Dhritarashtra might have expected some change of heart and mental conversion on the part of his sons and the Pandavas, under the influence of that holy place, and both sides might desist from the fratricidal war. Hence Dhritarashtra might have put the question in that form.

My people : Dhritarashtra refers to his sons – "my people" – excluding the Pandavas, and so it is evident that the blind King is partial to his own children.

Sanjaya : Samyak Jaya – Sanjaya. One whose victory is perfect is Sanjaya. It means one who has conquered his body, senses and mind. Sanjaya is the official war-reporter of the Gita. It shows that only a man of self control and purity of heart was qualified to hear, understand, and communicate the teaching of the Gita. Moreover Sanjaya by his personal merit, purity, and the grace of Vyasa and other sages, rendered himself fit to hear Lord Krishna's message directly, and see the *Viswarupa* of the Lord. Such good fortune befell Sanjaya. Caste, race, and colour are no bar to religious merit and spiritul advancement.

To the first question of Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya gives a direct answer in the last (78th) verse of the 18th discourse.

"Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of *yoga*, wherever is Arjuna the wielder of the bow there are prosperity, victory, happiness and sound policy–such is my conviction."

2. *Sanjaya's reply to Dhritarashtra's question.*

संजय उवाच

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।

आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २

Sanjaya uvacha

Dristva tu pandavanikam vyudham duryodhanastada I

Acharyamupasangamya raja vachanamabravit II 2

Meaning : संजय उवाच *Sanjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said, तदा *tada* : then, राजा *raja* : King, दुर्योधनः *duryodhanah* : Duryodhana, व्यूढम् *vyudham* : marshalled in battle order, पाण्डवानीकम्

pandavanikam : the pandava army, दृष्ट्वा तु *drishtwatu* : having seen well, आचार्यम् *ach ryam* : teacher (Dronacharya), उपसंगम्य *upasangamya* : approaching, वचनम् *vachanam* : words (speech), अब्रवीत् *abravit* : spoke.

Substance : Sanjaya said — King Duryodhana saw the Pandava-army arrayed in battle-order, and then, approaching the teacher Dronacharya, spoke these words.

Commentary : Dhrishtadyumna, the son of King Drupada was the commander of the Pandava-army. He arranged the army in a special formation known as *Vajra Vyuha* in the science of war. Duryodhana might have approached Dronacharya for the purpose of asking him to arrange his own army in a more powerful formation.

Duryodhana was a king possessing overall command of the entire army. Drona was one of the commanders. How does it happen that the king, instead of asking the commander to meet him, should himself approach him personally? This doubt may be cleared by considering the following points.

1. Duryodhana might have been struck with fear when he saw the enemy–army and heroes like Bhima and Arjuna. Fear, of course, is not an auspicious sign.
2. Drona was a commander and should have been at the post of duty from whence he should not be disturbed at that time.
3. Drona was a teacher, learned and old, and it was the duty of Duryodhana to show him respect.
4. The purpose of Duryodhana was to win the favour of Drona for achieving his own selfish object of winning the war against his cousins, who were also the disciples of Drona.

It should be noted that Duryodhana, like Arjuna, later saw the armies on both sides. But what a difference in attitude! Duryodhana never had any qualms of conscience, nor any feeling of pity for those who would be destroyed on both sides,

nor the supreme question of what is *Dharma* under these circumstances, nor any reconsideration of his attitude which would naturally arise in the heart of an evolved being. Arjuna was far superior to Duryodhana as a man, and so his reaction was entirely different, and the divine message of the Gita was offered to him.

3. Duryodhana speaks to Dronacharya :—

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३

Pasyaitam panduputranam acharya mahatim chamum ।
Vyudham drupadaputrena tava sishyena dhimata ॥ 3

Meaning : आचार्य *acharya* : O Master! तव शिष्येण *tava sishyena* : by your disciple, धीमता dhimata : wise (in the art of war, द्रुपदपुत्रेण *drup dapu trena* : by the son of Drupada, व्यूढम् *vyudham* : arranged in battle order, पाण्डुपुत्राणाम् *panduputranam* : of the sons of Pandu, एताम् *etham* : this, महतीम् *mahatim* : great, चमूम् *chamum* : army, पश्य *pasya* : behold.

Substance : O Master! Behold the great Pandava-Army, formed in battle order by your wise disciple, the son of Drupada.

Commentary : This and the following verses are spoken by Duryodhana. According to common usage, it should be mentioned here as 'Duryodhana Uvacha.' But Veda Vyasa does not give him the privilege of naming him as the speaker because he is evil-minded.

Duryodhana is deeply skilled in diplomacy. He tries to curry the favour of Drona by personally approaching him. Not only that, he tries to rouse Drona's passions of anger and hatred by referring to Drishtadyumna as the son of King Drupada. Duryodhana knows how Drupada insulted Drona and how Drona avenged the insult by humiliating the king with the help of Arjuna, and how later, Drupada, in a vengeful spirit, obtained through holy sacrifice a son who would cause the death of Drona, and that son was no other than the present

commander of the Pandava Army. Duryodhana tries to fan into flame the ancient hatred between Drona and Drupada. His purpose is evidently to rouse the combative spirit of his Master by speaking highly about the enemy-formation under the leadership of his disciple. Drishtadyumna is spoken of as '*dhimata*' - well-versed in the art of war. So it is that the Pandavas chose him as the Commander of their army.

4, 5, 6. Duryodhana mentions the names of the chief heroes of the Pandava army —.

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४

धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशीराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित् कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५

युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६

Atra sura mahesvasa bhimarjunasamayudhi ।
Yuyudhano viratascha drupadascha maharathah ॥ 4

Dhristaketuschekitanah kasirajascha viryavan ।
Purujit kuntibhojascha saibyascha narapungavah ॥ 5

Yudhamanyuscha vikranta uttamaujascha viryavan ।
Saubhadro draupadeyascha sarva-eva maharathah ॥ 6

Meaning : अत्र *atra* : here (in the Pandava army), महेष्वासाः *maheshvasah* : mighty archers, युधि *yudhi* : in battle, भीमार्जुनसमाः *bhimarjunasamah* : equal to Bhima and Arjuna, शूराः *surah* : heroes, युयुधानः *yuyudhanah* : Yuyudhana, विराटश्च *viratascha* : and Virata, महारथः *maharathah* : warriors of first order, द्रुपदश्च *drupadascha* : and Drupada, धृष्टकेतुः *drishtaketuh* : Drishtaketu, चेकितानः *chekitanah* : Chekitana, वीर्यवान् *viryavan* : the valiant, काशीराजश्च *kasirajascha* : and the King of Kasi, पुरुजित् *purujit* : Purujit : कुन्तिभोजश्च *kuntibhojascha* : and Kuntibhoja, नरपुङ्गवः

narapungavah : best of men, शैब्यश्च *saibyascha* : and Saibya, विक्रान्तः *vikrantah* : the bold, युधामन्युश्च *yudhamanyuscha* : and Yudhamanyu, वीर्यवान् *viryavan* : the valiant, उत्तमौजाश्च *uttamaujascha* : and Uttamauja, सौभद्रः *saubhadrah* : Abhimanyu (son of Subhadra), द्रौपदेयाश्च *draupadeyascha* : and the sons of Draupadi, सर्व एव *sarva eva*: all even, महारथाः *maharathah* : warriors of the first rank.

Substance : Here in the Pandava army there are heroes and mightly archers equal to Bhima and Arjuna in battle. They are Yuyudhana, Virata, Drupada of the first order of warriors. Dhrishtaketu, Chekitana, the valiant King of Kasi, Purujit, Kuntibhoja, Saibya, the best of men, the strong Yudhamanyu, the valiant Uttamauja, Abhimanya, the son of Subhadra and Arjuna, and the sons of Draupadi, all indeed heroes of the first rank among warriors.

Commentary : Duryodhana refers to the heroes and mighty archers of the Pandava army as warriors equal to Bhima and Arjuna. Evidently these two Pandava Princes strike terror into his mind.

There may be two reasons why Duryodhana mentions first the warriors of the enemy-forces, instead of those on his side. 1. He wants to rouse the combative spirit of Drona, 2. He feels somewhat discouraged by contrasting the power of his own army with that of the enemy.

Maharathah : One who can fight single-handed with ten thousand archers, and who has mastered the use of all weapons of offence and defence is called a Maharatha.

Yuyudhana : He is also known by the name Satyaki.

Drishtaketu : The son of Sisupala, King of Chedi.

Purjuit, Kuntibhoja : The brothers of Kunti.

Draupadeyah : The five sons of the five Pandava Princes through Draupadi (1) Prativindya (2) Sritasoma (3) Sritakirti (4) Satanika (5) Sritasena.

7. *Having named some of the foremost heroes of the Pandava Army, Duryodhana mentions the names of warriors on his side —*

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान्ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७

Asmakam tu visista ye tan nibodha dvijottama ।
Nayaka mama sainyasya samjnartham tan bravimi te ॥

Meaning :- द्विजोत्तम *dvijottama* : O best among the twice-born, अस्माकम् तु *asmakam tu* : ours also, विशिष्टा ये *visistha ye* : those who are distinguished, मम *mama* : my, सैन्यस्य *sainyasya*: of (my) army, नायकाः *nayakah* : leaders, ते *te* : to you, संज्ञार्थं *Samjnartham* : for information, तान् ब्रवीमि *tan bravimi* : I speak of them.

Substance : O best of the twice born! Now I recall to your mind the names of the distinguished warriors on our side, the leaders of my army.

Commentary : Duryodhana now tries to infuse fresh courage into himself by recalling the names of the eminent warriors and commanders of his own.

8, 9. भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९

Bhavan bhismascha karnascha kripascha samitinjayah ।
Asvatthama vikarnascha saumadattis tathaivacha ॥ 8

Anyecha bahavah sura madarthe tyakta-jivitah ।
Nana sastra praharanah sarve yuddha visaradah ॥ 9

Meaning : भवान् *bhavan* : yourself, भीष्मश्च *bhishmascha* : and Bhishma, कर्णश्च *karnascha* : and Karna, समितिंजयः *samitinjaiah* : victorious in battle, कृपश्च *kripascha* : and Kripa,

अश्वत्थामा *aswatthama* : Asvatthama, विकर्णश्च *vikarnascha* : and Vikarna, तथैवच *tathaivacha* : and thus even, सौमदत्तिः *saumadattih* : the son of Somadatta, मदर्थे *madarthe* : for my sake, त्यक्तजीविताः *tyaktajivitah* : who have given up their lives, बहवः *bahavah* : many, अन्येच *anyecha* : and others, शूराः *surah* : heroes, नानाशस्त्र प्रहरणाः *nanasastra praharanah* : armed with various weapons of war, सर्वे *sarve* : all, युद्धविशारदाः *yuddhavisaradah* : well skilled in battle.

Substance : Yourself and Bhishma and Karna and also Kripa, the victorious in war, Asvatthama, Vikarna, and also the son of Somadatta, and many other heroes also who have given up their lives for my sake, armed with various weapons and missiles, all well-skilled in battle.

Commentary : While mentioning the heroes on his side, Duryodhana first refers to Drona, and next to Bhishma, though the latter was the first supreme commander of the army. Duryodhana might have referred thus just because he was directly speaking to Drona or because it should be proper to refer to his teacher first, or because it would inspire Drona to do his best in the battle.

Though Drona knew the chief heroes on either side, Duryodhana, on the pretext of reminding him, enumerates them again, and calculated the difference in strength between the two armies. He means of course that all the warriors on his side are determined to fight to the last, to lay down their lives for his sake. But by a stroke of tragic irony, it is indicative of their destruction in battle. Some commentators hold the view that it is an ill-omen for Duryodhana.

10. Having named the various warriors on both sides Duryodhana now declares that his own army is superior.

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम्
पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १०

Aparyaptam tadasmakam balam bhismabhi rakshitam ।
Paryaptam tvidametesham balam bhimabhi rakshitam ॥ 10

Meaning : तत् *tat* : that, अस्माकं *asmakam* : our, बलम् *balam* : army, भीष्माभिरक्षितम् *bhishmabhirakshitam* : well-protected by Bhishma, अपर्याप्तम् *aparyaptam* : (is) limitless, एतेषाम् *etesham* : of the Pandavas, इदम् *idam* : this, बलम् *balam* : army, भीमाभिरक्षितम् *bhimabhirakshitam* : well-protected by Bhima, पर्याप्तं तु *paryaptam tu* : (is) indeed limited.

Commentary : There is difference of view among the commentators about the meaning of the words *aparyaptam* and *paryaptam*. Anandagiri, Sankarananda and others give the meaning 'limitless' to the word *aparyaptam* Sridhara and others give the opposite meaning 'limited'. But it appears that the first meaning is more appropriate to the context, and is consistent with the earlier estimate given by Duryodhana. In the Udyoga Parva (54, 60, 70) and in the Bhishma Parva (51-4-6) Duryodhana, speaking to his father and Drona respectively glorifies the strength of his own army. There is every reason why he should speak well of his own army in the present situation, when they are about to fight the battle. It should also be remembered that in the Bhishma Parva speaking to Drona, Duryodhana utters exactly the same verse while estimating the superior power of his own army.

Well - protected by Bhima — Why should Duryodhana refer to the Pandava army as well-protected by Bhima, when Dhristadyumna is the actual commander? The following reasons may be considered.

1. Duryodhana naturally thinks of Bhima as the most deadly enemy to himself and to his brothers. 2. Though Dhristadyumna is the commander, Bhima was entrusted with the task of protecting the army. 3. On the first day, Bhima was posted at the foremost point of the *Vajra Vyuha* So it is quite probable that Duryodhana should see Bhima first at the head of the Pandava army.

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११

Ayanesucha sarveshu yathabhagamavasthitah ।
Bhishmameva 'bhirakshantu bhavantah sarva eva hi ॥ 11

Meaning : भवन्तः *bhavanth* : you, सर्वएव *sarva eva* : all over, सर्वेषु *sarveshu* in all, अयनेषुच *ayaneshucha* : and the divisions of the army, यथाभागं *yathabhagam* : at the appointed posts, अवस्थिताः *avasthitah* : being stationed, भीष्ममेव *bhishmameva* : Bhishma alone, अभिरक्षन्तु हि *abhirakshantu hi* : protect indeed.

Substance : Therefore, in the rank and file let all generals standing firmly in their respective divisions, guard Bhishma alone.

Commentary : Bhishma was the most powerful hero well capable of protecting himself. Why should Duryodhana caution others to keep him safe and well-protected? There is a reason for it. The son of Drupada, Sikhandi, was first a eunach. Bhishma has pledged that he would never face eunach in battle. So, if the Pandavas should place Sikhandi at the foremost point of their army, Bhishma would not face it, and so his power would be partially neutralised. Taking advantage of it, the enemies might injure and kill him. Duryodhana knew the secret. So he directs all the leaders of his army to see that Sikhandi is kept out of the way, so that Bhishma would be free to fight at his best. If Bhishma was safe, he would be able to make the most powerful onslaught on the enemy, and be the bulwark of defence for the entire Kaurava army. Knowing this he directed all to protect Bhishma in all possible ways.

तस्य संजनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२

Tasya sanjanayan harsam kuruvridhah pitamahah ।
Simhanadam vinadyocchaih sankam dadhmau pratapavan ॥ 12

Meaning : प्रतापवान् *pratapavan* : the glorious, कुरुवृद्धः *kuru-vriddhah* : oldest of the kauravas, पितामहः *pitamahah* : grandsire Bhishma, तस्य *tasya* : to Duryodhana, हर्षं *harsham* : joy,

संजनयन् *sanjanayan* : causing, उच्चैः *ucchaiah* : loudly, सिंहनादं *simhanadam* : lion's roar, war cry, विनद्य *vinadya* : having sounded, शङ्खम् *sankham* : the conch, दध्मौ *dadhmau* : blew.

Substance : Then the glorious Bhishma, grandsire and oldest of the Kauravas, raised his war-cry and blew the conch to the great joy of Duryodhana.

Commentary : *The glorious* :— Bhishma is spoken of as the 'glorious'. He defeated mighty warriors like Parasurama and others.

Eldest of the Kauravas :— Bhishma with the exception of Bahlika was the eldest of the Kauravas. He was also the grandsire.

Finding that Duryodhana was somewhat agitated by surveying the powerful Pandava army, Bhishma raised his war cry and sounded the conch at the highest pitch to infuse courage into the King and his army. The blowing of the conch indicates that the battle is about to start.

13 Following the example of Bhishma, other heroes blew the conches, and drums and trumpets were sounded.

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३

Tatah sankhascha bheryascha panavanaka gomukhah ।
Sahasaiva 'bhyahanyanta sa sabdastumulo 'bhavat ॥ 13

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, शङ्खाश्च *sankhascha* : conches and, भेर्यश्च *bheryascha* : kettle drums and, पणवानकगोमुखाः *panavanakagomukhah* : tabors, drums and cow-horns, सहसैव *saha saiva* : quite suddenly, अभ्यहन्यन्त *abhyahanyanta* : blared forth, सशब्दः *sa sabdah* : that sound, तुमुलः *tumulah* : filled all sides, tremondous, अभवत् *abhavat* : was.

Substance : When Bhishma blew the conch all the other warriors quite suddenly blew the conches, and trumpets, drums and horns, were sounded atonce. The sound filled all sides and was temendous.

Commentary : The Kaurava army was roused into action by the war-cry of Bhishma. Having described what happened in the Kaurava army, Sanjaya now narrates the incidents of the Pandava army.

14. Krishna and Arjuna blew their conches.

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४

Tatah svetair hayair yukte mahati syandane sthitau ।
Madhavah pandavaschaiva divyau sankhau pradadh-
matuh ॥ 14

Meaning : ततः *tatah* : then, श्वेतैः *svetaiah* : with white, हयैः *hayaiah* horses, युक्ते *yukte* : yoked, महति *mahati* : magnificient, स्यन्दने *syandane* : in the chariot, स्थितौ *athitau* : seated, माधवः *madhavah* : Krishna, पाण्डवश्चैव *Pandavas chaiva* : and also Arjuna, दिव्यौ *divyam* : celestial, शङ्खौ *sankhau* : conches, प्रदध्मतुः *pradadhmatuh* : blew.

Substance : Then seated in the magnificient chariot yoked with white horses, Krishna and Arjuna also blew their celestial conches.

Commentary : It is here that Lord Krishna and Arjuna first appear in the Gita, seated in the wonderful chariot drawn by milk-white horses; Nara and Narayana appear before us in their beautiful manifestation as Arjuna and Krishna. White indicates *Sattva* and reflects *Dharma*, and where *Dharma* is there is victory.

The magnificient chariot and the great bow Gandiva were given to Arjuna by the God of Fire, after the burning of the Khandava Forest They were of exceptional power. The four white horses were among the hundred presented to Arjuna by Chitraradha, King of the Gandharvas. They could move any where on the earth and sky. It is said that the four horses are the four Vedas, and Arjuna and Krishna are *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*.

Madhavah : 'Ma' means Lakshmi and 'dhava' means husband. Sanjaya suggests the Lord of Victory blew the conch on the side of the Pandavas and secured for them a mighty kingdom.

Bhishma was the principal hero of the Kauravas, and so he blew the conch first. Lord Krishna blew the conch first on the side of the Pandavas, and so it is clear that the Lord is himself the main force, and the rest are only instruments of action in his hands.

Pandavah : As it is declared later in 'Pandavanam Dhanamjayah', the name applies to Arjuna here.

15, 16, 17, 18. The following four verses describe the conch sounds of the various warriors of the Pandava Army.

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनंजयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५

अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलः सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७

द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान् दध्मुः पृथक् पृथक् ॥ १८

Panchajanyam hrishikeso devadattam dhanamjayah ।
Poundram dadhmau maha sankham bhima karma
vrikodarah ॥ 15

Anantavijayam raja kunti putro yudhisthirah ।
Nakulah sahadevascha sughosha manipushpakau ॥ 16

Kasyascha paramesvasah sikhandicha maha rathah ।
Dhristadyumno viratascha satyakischa 'parajitah ॥ 17

Drupado draupadeyascha sarvasah prithivipate ।
Saubhadrascha mahabahuh sankhan dadhmuh prithak–
prithak । 18

Meaning : पृथिवीपते *Prithivipate* : O King Dhritarashtra!, हृषीकेशः *hrishikesah* : Krishna, पाञ्चजन्यं *panchajaayam* : (the conch named) Pancha Janyam, धनंजयः *dhanamjayah* : Arjuna, देवदत्तम् *devadattam* : (the conch named) Devadatta, भीमकर्मा *bheema karma* : doer of terrible deeds, वृकोदरः *vrikodarah* : Bhima, पौण्ड्रं *paundram* : (the conch named) Paundram, महाशङ्खं *mahasankham* : great conch, दध्मौ *dadhmam* : blew, कुन्तीपुत्रः *Kuntiputrah* : the son of Kunti, राजा *raja* : King, युधिष्ठिरः *Yudhishtarah* : Dharmaraja, अनन्तविजयं *anantavijayam* : (the conch named) Anantavijayam, नकुलः *nakulah* : Nakula, सहदेवः *sahadevah* : Sahadeva, सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ *sughosha manipushpakau* : (the conches named) Sughosha and Manipushpaka, परमेष्वासः *paramesvasah* : an excellent archer, काश्यश्च *kesyas cha* : and Kasya, the King of Kasi, महारथः *maharathah* : mighty leader, शिखण्डी च *sikhandi cha* : and Sikhandi, धृष्टद्युम्नः *dristadyumnah* : Drishtadyumna, विराटश्च *Viratas cha* : and Virata, अपराजितः *aparajitah* : the unconquered, सात्यकिश्च *Satyakis cha* : and Satyaki, द्रुपदः *drupadah* : Drupada, द्रौपदेयाश्च *draupadeyas cha* : and the sons of Draupadi महाबाहुः *mahabahuh* : mightly armed, सौभद्रश्च *Saubhadras cha* : and Abhimanyu, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : all, पृथक्पृथक् *pridhak pridhak* : separately, शङ्खान् *sankhani* conches, दध्मुः *dadhmau* : blew.

Substance : O King Dhritarashtra! Krishna blew the conch Pancha Janyam, Arjuna blew Devadatta, and Bhima the doer of terrible deeds, blew the great conch named Paundra. King Yudhishtara, son of Kunti, blew Anantavijayam, Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conches named Sughosha and Manipushpaka. The King of Kasi, an excellent archer, Sikhandi, the mighty commander Dhristadyumna, Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered, Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, Abhimanya, the mighty armed, all blew the conches separately.

Commentary : It is already said that the conches blown by Krishna and Arjuna are of celestial quality.

Panchajanyam : The conch of Krishna was made from the bones of a demon called Panchajan, and so it is called Panchajanyam.

Hrishikesha : Krishna. 'Hrishika' means sense organs. 'Esa' means ruler. So the name means the ruler of the sense-organs (i. e) *Paramatma*, the eternal witness who commands the senses. The word has another meaning (i. e) the source of all bliss.

Dhanamjayah : Arjuna. He acquired this name because he won wealth from all kings by performing the Rajasuya Yaga.

Vrikodarah : Bhima. Vrika means wolf. So the word means wolf-bellied. The name may also mean one who has the fire called 'Vrika' in his stomach, and so capable of consuming anything.

19. *Sanjaya describes the effect of the martial sounds of the Pandava army on the Kauravas.*

स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९

Sa ghosho dhartarastranam hridayani vyadarayat ।
Nabhascha prithivim chaiva tumulo vyanunadayan । 19

Meaning : तुमुलः *tumulah* : tumultuous, सः *sah* : that, घोषः *ghoshah* : sound, uproar, नभश्च *nabhas cha* : the sky and, पृथिवीम् *prithivim* : earth, चैव *chaiva* : and also, व्यनुनादयन् *vyanunadayan* : made to reverberate, धार्तराष्ट्राणां *dhartarashtranam* : of the Kauravas, हृदयानि *hridayani* : hearts, व्यदारयत् *vyadarayat* : rent.

Substance : The tumultuous sounds of the Pandava army filling all sides reverberated through the earth and sky and rent the hearts of the Kauravas.

Commentary: Hearing the tremendous uproar caused by the blowing of conches by Krishna, Arjuna, and others, the Kauravas trembled with fear, and felt shocked and stunned by the uproar. It indicates the final defeat and destruction of the Kauravas at the hands of the Pandavas.

20, 21 :

अथ व्यवस्थितान्दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसम्पाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २०
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

Atha vyavasthitan dristva dhartarastran kapidhvajah ।
Pravrittee sastrasampate dhanur udyamya pandavah ॥ 20
Hrishikesam tada vakyam idam aha mahipate ।

Meaning : महीपते *Mahipate* : O King Dhritarashtra!, अथ *atha* : now, शस्त्रसंपाते *sastra sampate* : discharge of weapons, प्रवृत्ते *pravritte* : about to begin, कपिध्वजः *Kapidhvajah* : monkey-ensigned, पाण्डवः *Pandavah* : Arjuna, व्यवस्थितान् *vyavasthitan* : standing arrayed, धार्तराष्ट्रान् *dhartarashtran* : Kauravas, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : seeing, धनुः *dhanuh* : bow, उद्यम्य *udyamya* : took into his hands, तदा *tada* : then, हृषीकेशम् *hrishikesam* : to Krishna, इदम् *idam* : this, वाक्यम् *vakyam* : speech, आह *aha* : spoke.

Substance : O King! Now seeing the Kauravas arrayed in battle-order and the discharge of weapons about to begin, Arjuna took up his bow and spoke these words to Lord Krishna.

Commentary : *Kapidhvajah* : Arjuna. The banner of Arjuna had the emblem of Hanuman, and he is called Kapidhvajah. In the Aranya Parva of Mahabharata, Bhima meets Hanuman and appeals to him to help them in the impending war against the Kauravas. Hanuman gave him the boon that he would be present on the banner of Arjuna and in that way help them to win the war.

21, 22 :

अर्जुन उवाच

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२

Arjuna uvacha

Senayor ubhayor madhye ratham sthapayame 'chyuta ॥ 21
Yavad etan nirikshe 'ham yoddhu kaman avasthitan ।
Kair maya saha yoddhavyam asmin ranasamudyame ॥ 22

अर्जुन उवाच – *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : अच्युत *achyuta* : O Krishna!, अस्मिन् *asmin* : in this, रणसमुद्यमे *ranasamudyame* : commencement of battle, मया *maya* : by me, कैः सह *kaih* : with them, योद्धव्यम् *yodhavyam* : the battle is to be faught, योद्धुकामान् *yoddhukaman* : desirous to fight, अवस्थिताम् *avasthitam* : standing here, एताम् *etam* : them, यावत् *yavat* : from whence, अहम् *aham* : I, निरीक्षे *nirikshe* : behold, (तावत्) (*tavat* : there), सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayor madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, मे *me* : my, रथम् *ratham* : chariot, स्थापय *sthapaya* : place.

Substance : O Krishna! Place my chariot in the middle of the two armies at a spot from whence I could see those who stand here eager to fight, and know those with whom I should fight on the eve of this battle.

Commentary : It is the practice of a first-rate warrior to know and observe the positions and postures of the enemies with whom he has to fight. So Arjuna wanted Krishna to drive the chariot forward and stop it in the middle of the two armies

Achyuta : The word means one who has no fall or one who never slips down from the state of the Supreme Self. It

might also mean one who protects those who take refuge in Him, from sinking in the ocean of *samsara*. Those who do not fall from their spiritual practices reach Achyuta. So it is the duty of every spiritual aspirant to be cautious and careful in keeping up their devoted search for the Supreme Being.

23 :

योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३

Yotsyamanan avekse'ham ya ete'tra samagatah ।
Dhartarastrasya durbuddher yuddhe priyachikirshavah ॥ 23

Meaning : दुर्बुद्धेः *durbuddheh* : of the evil—minded, धार्तराष्ट्रस्य *dhartarashtrasya* : of Duryodhana, युद्धे *yuddhe* : in the battle, प्रियचिकीर्षवः *priyachikirshavah* : wishing to please, एते *ete* : those warriors, अत्र *atra* : here, समागताः *samagatah* : assembled, योत्स्यमानान् *yotsyamanan* : ready to fight, अहम् *aham* : I, अवेक्षे *avekshe* : will see.

Substance : I will see these warriors assembled here for the battle wishing to please the evil-minded Duryodhana.

Commentary : *Of the evil-minded* :- Duryodhana is described as evil-minded. He has tried to injure and destroy the Pandavas in many ways. So Arjuna refers to him as a wicked man. 'Buddhi nasat pranasyati'. The Lord declares that man perishes when he loses the power of discrimination. Therefore the epithet 'durbuddhi' is indicative of the impending destruction of Duryodhana. It is a warning to all those whose mental disposition is darkened by evil propensities, that, like Duryodhana, they would ruin themselves by defeat, disgrace and death. Let everybody therefore strive for purity of mind and heart for spiritual progress.

Wishing to please: All those who sided Duryodhana perished. To support and encourage evil is also evil, and such a man suffers the same fate as the evil-doer. It should by all means be avoided by the spiritual seeker.

Sanjaya describes what Lord Krishna did afterwards.

संजय उवाच

24. एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४

25. भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान्कुरूनिति ॥ २५

Samjaya uvacha

Evamukto hrishikeso gudakesena bharata ।
Senayor ubhayor madhye sthapayitva rathottamam ॥ 24

Bhishma drona pramukhatah sarveshamcha mahikshitam ।
Uvacha partha pasyitan samavetan kuruniti ॥ 25

संजय उवाच *Samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O descendent of Bharata! (King Dhritarashtra) एवम् *evam* : in this manner, गुडाकेशेन *gudakesena*: by Arjuna, उक्तः *uktah* : addressed, हृषीकेशः *hrishikesah* : Lord Krishna, सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayor madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः *bhishma drona pramukhatah* : in front of Bhishma and Drona, सर्वेषांच *sarvesham cha* : and all, महीक्षिताम् *mahikshitam* : Kings, रथोत्तमम् *rathothamam* : the best of chariots, स्थापयित्वा *sthapayitva* : having placed, पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna !, समवेतान् *samavetan* : assembled, एतान् *etan* : those, कुरून् *kurun* : Kauravas, पश्य *pasya* : behold, इति *iti* : thus, उवाच *uvacha* : (Krishna) said.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Advised thus by Arjuna Lord Krishna placed the noble chariot in the middle of the two armies, and in front of Bhishma and Drona, and all the Kings, and said : 'O Arjuna ! Behold those Kauravas gathered here.'

Commentary : *Gudakesah* : One who has conquered sleep (i. e.), one who has conquered 'tamas' and is constantly wakeful and alert. Concentration of mind and avoiding mistakes

and errors are essential while listening to spiritual teaching. The epithet Gudakesah shows that Arjuna possesssed these qualities when he listened to the highest spiritual teaching in the form of the Gita. The Lord said : "Behold these Kauravas." The Kauravas were closely related and Arjuna was naturally moved by feelings of sorrow and despair when he saw them. The situation is thus most congenial for the spiritual teaching of the Lord, and the birth of the Gita is indeed the highest blessing for all mankind.

Sanjaya narrates what happened afterwards.

26. तत्रापश्यत् स्थितान् पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान्मातुलान्भ्रातॄन् पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६

27. श्वशुरान्सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।

Tatra pasyat sthitan parthah pitrun atha pitamahan ।
Acharyan matulan bhratrun putran pautran sakhimstatha ॥ 26

Svasuran suhrudaschaiva senayor ubhoyor api ।

Meaning : तत्र *tatra* : there, पार्थः *parthah* : Arjuna, सेनयोरुभयोरपि *senayor ubhayorapi* : in both the armies also, स्थितान् *sthitan* : stationed, पितॄन् *pitrun* : fathers, अथ *atha* : and, पितामहान् *pitamahan* : grandfathers, आचार्यान् *acharyan* : teachers, मातुलान् *matulan* : maternal uncles, भ्रातॄन् *bhratrun* : brothers, पुत्रान् *putran* : sons, पौत्रान् *pautran* : grandsons, सखीन् *sakhin* : comrades, तथा *tatha* : also, श्वशुरान् *svasuran* : fathers-in-law, सुहृदः *suhrudah* : friends, चैव *chaiva* : and also, अपश्यत् *apasyat* : saw.

Substance : There Arjuna saw fathers, grand-fathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, companions, fathers-in-law, and friends in both the armies.

Commentary : *Fathers* – Bhurisravas and others,
grand-fathers – Bhishma and others,
teachers – Drona and others,
uncles – Saibya and others,

brothers – Duryodhana and others,
sons – Lakshmana and others,
grandsons – The sons of Lakshmana and others,
friends – Aswathama and others,
fathers-in-law – Drupada and others,
well-wishers – Kritavarma and others.

Sanjaya describes the feelings of Arjuna as he beholds his relations and friends.

तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान्बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ २७

28. कृपया परयाऽऽविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

Tan samikshya sa kaunteyah sarvan bandhun avasthitan ।
Kripaya parayavisto visidannidam abravit ॥ 27

Meaning : सः *sah* : he, कौन्तेयः *kaunteyah* : Arjuna (son of Kunti), अवस्थितान् *avasthitan* : standing (arrayed), तान् *tan* : these, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, बन्धून् *bandhun* : relations, समीक्ष्य *samikshya* : having seen, परया *paraya* : deep, कृपया *kripaya* : by pity, आविष्टः *avishtah* : filled, विषीदन् *vishidan* : sorrowfully, इदम् *idam* : this, अब्रवीत् *abravit* : said.

Substance : Seeing all those relations standing arrayed for the impending battle, Arjuna was moved with deep pity and spoke thus sorrowfully.

Commentary : *Kripa* : It means pity, compassion and kindness. It is no doubt a noble quality. But it loses its divine virtue in a situation when man is called upon by *Dharma* to fight for a righteous cause. Arjuna was overtaken by *Maya* with the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine'. "How can I kill my own people?" This was the cause of Arjuna's sorrow. He lost the spirit of righteous action. Arjuna, being a Kshatriya, his pity under those circumstances, was a mental weakness, a negation of *Dharma*. It is this weakness which Lord Krishna removes by his spiritual teaching.

Sorrowfully : Whatever material and physical powers and prowess a man may possess, if he is not free from igno-

rance, he sinks into despondency in any critical situation. Arjuna was a warrior of the first rank. He possessed miraculous powers and weapons. But covered by ignorance, he began to weep and wail like a helpless child. It is a disease of the mind which should be thoroughly cured. This could be done only by the knowledge of *Atma* which brings supreme freedom from all the undesirable modifications of the mind, from all painful feelings and passions. If a hero like Arjuna should be over-powered by grief, what of ordinary mortals? Therefore the conquest of the mind by spiritual knowledge, and through it the attainment of peace – this is the duty of every individual. Lord Krishna teaches the spiritual path to reach the goal for all human beings.

अर्जुन उवाच

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ २८

29 सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ २९

80 गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ ३०

Arjuna uvacha

Dristvemam svajanam krishna yuyutsum samupasthitam ॥ 28

Sidanti mama gatrani mukhamcha parisusyati ।
Vepathuscha sarire me romaharshascha jayate ॥ 29

Gandivam sramsate hastat tvak chaiva paridahyate ।
Nacha saknomyavasthatum bhramativacha me manah ॥ 30

Meaning : अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said, कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! युयुत्सुम् *yuyutsum* : eager to fight, समुपस्थितम् *samupasthitam* : *arrayed*, इमम् *imam* : these, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : kinsmen, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, मम *mama* : my, गात्राणि *gatrani* : limbs, सीदन्ति *sidanti* : fail, मुखंच *mukham cha* : and

mouth, परिशुष्यति *parisushyati* : is parching, मे *me* : my, शरीरेच *sarire cha* : and in (my) body, वेपथुः *vepathuh* : trembling, रोमहर्षः *romaharshah* : horrification, जायते *jayate* : arise, गाण्डीवम् *gandivam* : the Gandiva, हस्तात् *hastat* : from my hand, स्रंसते *sramsate* : slips, त्वक्चैव *tvak chaiva* : and also (my) skin, परिदह्यते *paridahyate* : burns all over, अवस्थातुं *avasthatum* : to stand, नचशक्नोमि *nacha saknomi* : and I am not able, मे *me* : my, मनः *manah* : mind, भ्रमतीवच *bhramativa cha* : seems whirling also.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! Seeing these my own kinsmen gathered here for battle, my limbs lose their hold, my tongue is dried up, my body trembles, my skin is burning all over, my hair stands on end, my Gandiva slips from my hand, and I am not able to stand even, and my mind is whirling.

Commentary : In these verses, Arjuna describes the bodily and mental changes which overwhelmed him on that occasion. Those are all signs of sorrow, weakness and despair. How does it happen that Arjuna who faught many battles and who won miraculous victories single-handed, should lose his courage and strength in this particular situation? His material and physical powers are just the same as before. But mentally he suffered a tremendous shock. Why? – by the thought born of *Avidya* – these are my men, how can I kill them? The egotistic feeling of 'I' and 'mine' engulfed his mind. So he cries 'svajanam' 'svajanam' (our people) repeatedly.

This is ignorance, and *Jnana*, knowledge, is the only remedy for it. Lord Krishna offers this *Atma-Jnana* to Arjuna and enables him to see things clearly, to free himself from thoughts of weakness, and to carry out his *Dharma*.

Arjuna enumerates the causes and reasons why he is unwilling to fight.

81. निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ ३१

Nimittanicha pasyami viparitani keshava ।
Na cha sreyo 'nupasyami hatva svajanam ahave ॥ 31

Meaning : केशव *Kesava* : Krishna, विपरीतानि *viparitani* : adverse, निमित्तानिच *nimittani cha* : and omens, पश्यामि *pasyami* : I see, आहवे *ahave* : in battle, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : our people, हत्वा *hatva* : killing, अनुपश्यामि *anupasyami* : I see, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good.

Substance : O Krishna ! I see many ill-omens and I do not understand what good could come by killing my own people in battle.

32. न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२

Na kankshe vijayam krishna na cha rajyam sukhanicha ।
Kim no rajyena govinda kim bhogair jivitena va ॥ 32

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! विजयम् *vijayam* : victory, न काङ्क्षे *na kankshe* : I do not desire, राज्यमच *rajyam cha* : also kingdom, सुखानिच *sukhani cha* : and pleasures, न *na* : not, गोविन्द *Govinda* : O Krishna !, नः *nah* : to us, राज्येन *rajyena* : by kingdom, किम् *kim* : what (use), भोगैः *bhogaih* : by enjoyments, जीवितेनवा *jivitenava* : or life itself, किम् *kim* : what (use).

Substance : O Krishna ! I do not desire victory or kingdom or pleasures. Of what avail are these—kingdom, enjoyment, or even life itself to us.

Commentary : The Sastras say that the knowledge of *Atma* should be taught only to those who possess this quality of renunciation Does Arjuna possess this quality ? Is he fit to receive the supreme knowledge ? This doubt is cleared by this verse. For some reason or other, he now feels the futility of all earthly glory and the wretchedness of all earthly pleasures and enjoyments. Life itself appears as a useless waste. He has no relish for it. He feels that even if he is offered dominion over the three worlds, it is of no avail to him.

This is the auspicious moment for the revelation of the supreme wisdom. Therefore, Lord Krishna chooses this particular moment, when the fire of renunciation burns brightest in the heart of Arjuna to teach the highest spiritual knowledge.

33. येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ ३३

34. आचार्याः पितरः पुत्राः तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः श्यालाः संबन्धिनस्तथा ॥ ३४

Yeshamarthe kankshitam no rajyam bhogah sukhanicha ।
Ta ime'vasthita yuddhe pranams tyaktva dhananicha ॥ 33

Acharyah pitarah putrah tathaivacha pitamahah ।
Matulah svasurah pautrah syalah sambandhinastatha ॥ 34

Meaning : नः *nah* : by us, राज्यम् *rajyam* : kingdom, भोगाः *bhogah* : enjoyments, सुखानिच *sukhani cha* : and pleasures, येषामर्थे *yeshamarthe* : for whose sake, काङ्क्षितम् *kankshitam* : is desired, ते *te* : they, आचार्याः *acharyah* : teachers, पितरः *pitarah* : fathers, पुत्राः *pautrah* : sons, तथैवच *tathaiva cha* : and others also, पितामहाः *pitamah* : grandfathers, मातुलाः *matulah* : maternal uncles, श्वशुराः *svasurah* : fathers-in-law, पौत्राः *pautrah* : grandsons, श्यालाः *syalah* : brothers-in-law, तथा *tatha* : thus, सम्बन्धिनः *sambandhinah* : relatives, त इमे *te ime* : these people, प्राणान् *pranam* : life, धनानिच *dhanani cha* : and wealth, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having abandoned, युद्धे *yuddhe* : in battle, अवस्थिताः *avasthitah* : are standing.

Substance : Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, enjoyments, and pleasures—teachers, fathers, sons, grandfathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, brothers in-law, grandsons and other relations – are all standing here ready for battle, having abandoned their wealth and very life even.

35. एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ ३५

Etan na hantum icchami ghnato'pi madhusudana ।
Api trailokya rajyasya hetoh kim nu mahikrite ॥ 35

Meaning : मधुसूदन *Madhusudana* : O Krishna!, घ्नतोपि *ghnatopi* : even if killed by them, एतान् *etan* : these, त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः *trailokya rajyasya hetoh* : for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, नहन्तुम् *nahantum* : not to kill, इच्छामि *ichhami* : I wish, महीकृते *mahikrite* : for sake of the earth, किंनु *kim nu* : how then.

Substance : O Krishna! I do not wish to kill those, though they may kill me, even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, much less for a fragment of this earth.

Commentary : *Madhusudana* : Krishna—the slayer of the wicked demon Madhu.

36. निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान् नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ ३६

Nihatya dhartarastrannah ka pritihsyajjanardana ।
Papameva 'srayed asman hatvaitan atatayinah ॥ 36

Meaning : जनार्दन *Janardana*! : O Krishna, धार्तराष्ट्रान् *dhartarashtran* : the Kauravas, निहत्य *nihatya* : having slain, नः *nah* : to us, काप्रीतिः स्यात् *ka priti syat* : what pleasure may be, आततयिनः *atatayinah* : felons, एतान् *etan* these, हत्वा *hatva* : having slain, अस्मान् *asman* : to us, पापमेव *papam eva* : sin only, आश्रयेत् *asrayet* : would come.

Substance : What delight may be to us killing these Kauravas? Only sin would take hold of us having slain these felons.

Commentary : *Felons* : Those who commit six kinds of crimes towards others are felons. They are, one who (1) sets fire to the house of another person, (2) poisons him, (3) falls on him with sword in hand to kill and murder, (4) or steals his wealth, (5) or land, (6) or wife. Such sinners are called 'atatayinah'. Duryodhana and his henchmen have committed all these crimes, and so they are felons.

37. तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३७

Tasman narha vayam hantum dhartarastran svabandhavan ।
Svajanam hi katham hatva sukhinah syama madhava ॥ 37

Meaning : माधव *madhava* : Krishna, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, स्व बान्धवान् *sva bandhavan* : our relations, धार्तराष्ट्रान् *dhartarashtran* : the Kauravas, हन्तुम *hantum* : to kill, वयम् *vayam* : we, नार्हाः *narha* : are not justified, स्वजनम्हि *svajanam hi* : kinsmen indeed, हत्वा *hatva* : having killed, सुखिनः *sukhinah* : happy, कथम् *katham* : how, स्याम *syama* : may (we) be.

Substance : O Krishna! Therefore we should not kill the sons of Dhritarashtra who are our relations. Having killed our own people, how can we be happy?

Commentary : Arjuna's mind is completely obsessed with the thought of 'I' and 'Mine' He cries out 'our relations', 'our kinsmen', 'svabandhavah', 'svajanam'. Indeed the greatest obstacle on the path of self-realisation is the deep rooted thought of 'I' and 'Mine', pertaining to the body So long as man imagines himself to be the body, all these thoughts of relations, friends, teachers, continue to harass the mind. Therefore the teaching of Lord Krishna is intended to remove the deep-seated identification with the body and to reveal the truth that he is not the body but the immortal ever free *Atma*.

38. यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३८

39. कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३९

Yadyapyete na pasyanti lobhopahata chetasah ।
Kulakshayakritam dosham mitradrohecha patakam ॥ 38

Katham na jneyamasmabhih papadasman nivartitum ।
Kulakshaya kritam dosham prapasyadbhir janardana ॥ 39

Meaning : जनार्दन *Janardana* : O Krishna ! लोभोपहतचेतसः *lobhopahatachetasah* : with minds over-powered by greed, एते *ete* : these, कुलक्षयकृतम् *kulakshayakritam* : in the destruction of the race, दोषम् *dosham* : evil, मित्रद्रोहे *mitra drohe* : in hostility to friends, पातकम् च *patakam cha* : and sin, यद्यपि *yadyapi* : even though, न पश्यन्ति *na pasyanti* : do not see, कुलक्षयकृतम् *kulakshaya-kritam* : in the destruction of the family, दोषम् *dosham* : the evil, प्रपश्यद्भिः *prapasyadbhih* : by us clearly seeing, अस्माभिः *asmabhih* : by us, पापात् अस्मात् *papad asmat* : from this sin, निवर्तितुम् *nivartitum* : to turn away, कथम् *katham* : why, न ज्ञेयम् *na jneyam* : should not be learnt.

Substance : O Krishna ! Though these men whose minds are overpowered by greed do not see the evil in the destruction of families and the sin in hostility to friends, why not we realise the evil of race-destruction and turn away from the path of sin ?

Commentary : The Kauravas are described as men whose minds are completely overwhelmed by *kama*, *krodha*, and *lobha*— Desire, hatred, and greed which form the triple gateway to Hell.

The mind is vitiated by these evil tendencies, and Duryodhana and his henchmen were victims of this triple evil, and

suffered awful destruction. Those who are on the auspicious path of spiritual progress should resolutely guard themselves against these evils.

40. कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नम् अधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ४०

41. अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ ४१

42. सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४२

Kulakshaye pranasyanti kuladharmah sanatanah ।
Dharme naste kulam kritsnam adharmo 'bhibhavatyuta ॥ 40

Adharmabhibhavat Krishna pradusyanti kula striyah ।
Strishu dustasu varshneya jayate varnasamkarah ॥ 41

Samkaro narakayaiva kulaghnanam kulasyacha ।
Patanti pitaro hyesham lupta pindodaka kriyah ॥ 42

Meaning : कुलक्षये *kulakshaye* : in the destruction of family, सनातनाः *sanatanah* : immemorial, कुलधर्माः *kuladharmah* : family religious rites, प्रणश्यन्ति *pranasyanti* : perish, धर्मेनष्टे *dharme nashte* : dharma being destroyed, कुलम् कृत्स्नम् *kulam kritsnam* : the whole family, अधर्मः *adharmah* : impiety, अभिभवत्युत *abhibhavatyuta* : overcomes indeed, कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! अधर्माभिभवात् *adharmabhibhavat* : from the dominance of impiety, कुलस्त्रियः *kulastriyah* : women of the family, प्रदुष्यन्ति *pradushyanti* : become corrupt, वार्ष्णेय *varshneya* : O Krishna ! स्त्रीषुदुष्टासु *strishu dushtasu* : in women becoming corrupt, वर्णसंकरः *varnasankarah* : admixture of castes, जायते *jayate* : arises, संकरः *sankarah* : confusion, कुलघ्नानाम्च *kulaghnanam cha* : and of the destroyers of the family, कुलस्य *kulasya* : of the family, नरकायैव *narakayaiva* : is for hell

only, एषाम् *esham* : of these, पितरःहि *pitarah* : the dead fathers, लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः *lupta pindodaka kriyah* : deprived of the offerings of food and water, 'Sraddha' and 'Tarpana', पतन्ति *patanti* : fall.

Substance : O Krishna! When the family is destroyed, the immemorial religious rites and rituals perish; and when these perish, they fall into a state of impiety; and by impiety the women of the family become corrupt; and when women become corrupt the purity of caste is polluted by confusion and admixture; and caste pollution leads to hell for both the family and the slayers of the family; and the dead fore-fathers fall from the higher realms of existence, being deprived of the rites of *Sraddha* and *Tarpana*.

43. दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४३

44. उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४४

Dosairetaih kulaghnanam varna samkarakarakaih ।
Utsadyante jatidharmah kuladharmascha sasvatah ॥ 43

Utsanna kuladharmanam manusyanam janardana ।
Narake niyatam vaso bhavatityanususruma ॥ 44

Meaning : कुलघ्नानाम् *kulaghnanam :* of the slayers of families, वर्णसंकरकारकैः *varnasankarakarakaih* : causing pollution of castes, एतैः *etaih* : by those, दोषैः *doshaih* : evil deeds, शाश्वताः *sasvatah* : ever-lasting, जातिधर्माः *jati dharmah* : the laws of the race, कुलधर्माश्च *kuladharma cha* : and the laws of the family, उत्साद्यन्ते *utsadyante* : are destroyed, जनार्दन *Janardana* : O Krishna! उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणाम् *utsanna kuladharmanam* : with their family laws destroyed, मनुष्याणाम् *manushyanam* : of men, नरके *narake* : in Hell, अनियतम् वासः *aniyatam vasah* dwelling for unknown period,

भवति *bhavathi* : is, इति *iti* : thus, अनुशुश्रुम *anususruma* : we have heard.

Substance : O Krishna! By the evil deeds of these slayers of families, who cause caste-pollution, the eternal laws of race and family perish. And men whose sacred rites and rituals are destroyed, are compelled to inherit hell for an unknown period. Thus have we heard.

45. अहो बत महत् पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४५

Aho bata mahat papam kartum vyavasita vayam ।
Yad rajya sukha lobhena hantum svajanam udyatah ॥ 45

Meaning : अहो *aho* : lo! बत *bata* : alas, यत् *yat* : that, वयम् *vayam* : we, राज्यसुखलोभेन *rajyasukha lobhena* : with desire to enjoy the kingdom, स्वजनम् *svajanam* : kinsmen, हन्तुम् *hantum*: to kill, उद्यताः *udyatah* : prepared, महत्पापम् *mahat papam* great sin, कर्तुम् *kartum* : to do, व्यवसिताः *vyavasitah* : prepared.

Substance : Alas! What great sin are we prepared to commit by killing our own kinsmen for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of a kingdom!

46. यदि मामप्रतीकारम् अशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युः तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४६

Yadi mam apratikaram asastram sastrapanayah ।
Dhartarastra rane hanyuh tan me kshemataram bhavet ॥ 46

Meaning : अशस्त्रम् *asastram* : unarmed, अप्रतीकारम् *apratikaram* : unresisting, माम् *mam* : me, रणे *rane* : in battle, शस्त्रपाणयः *sastrapanayah* : weapons in hand, धार्तराष्ट्राः *dhartarashtrah* : Kauravas, हन्युः *hanyuh* should slay, यदि *yadi* : if, तत् *tat* : that, मे *me* : to me, क्षेमतरम् *kshemataram* : better, भवेत् *bhavet* would be.

Substance : If the sons of Dhartarashtra, weapons in hand, should slay me unresisting and unarmed in the battle, that would be better for me.

Commentary : *Better :* Arjuna says that if his enemies should kill him without any resistence on his part, it would be for his own well-being and welfare. He may have the following reasons to come to such a conclusion – (1) By refusing to fight he would escape the sin of slaying the family with all its evil effects, and thus retain the former good that he has already done. (2 He would escape the sin of killing his own kinsmen. (3) His relatives, friends and teachers would live. (4) To spare the lives of relations and teachers is in itself a good act which ultimately would help him to rise higher and higher in spirituality.

Having described the mental conflict of Arjuna Sanjaya now proceeds to narrate what he did afterwards.

47· एवमुक्त्वाऽर्जुनः सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ ४७

Samjaya uvacha

Evam uktva 'rjunah samkhye rathopastha upavisat ।
Visrijya sasaram chapam sokasamvignamanasah ॥ 47

संजय उवाच *samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : संख्ये *sankhy* : in battle, अर्जुनः *Arjunah* : Arjuna, एवम् *evam* : in this manner, उक्त्वा *uktva* : having spoken, शोकसंविग्नमानसः *sokasamvignamanasah* : with mind distressed by sorrow, सशरम् *sasaram* with arrows, चापम् *chapam* bow, विसृज्य *visrijya* : dropping, रथोपस्थे *rathopastah* : on the seat of the chariot, उपाविशत् *upavisat* : sat down.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Having spoken in this manner, Arjuna, distressed with sorrow, dropped bow and arrows and sat down on the seat of the chariot.

Commentary : *With the mind distressed by sorrow :* Arjuna dropped the great bow Gandiva and sat down in a mood of doubt, despair and helplessness Never before in his life did he do so on any battle-field in any situation. So there should be a powerful cause for the present problem of Arjuna. This cause is easily discernable from his own words. It is nothing but the deeply planted feeling of attachment for his relations and friends, and the awful contemplation of slaying them in the battle. He speaks repeatedly of 'svajanam' (our people). His distress for the destruction of his own people touches his very heart and throws the whole man off his balance. As a result, he decides to give up every thing–kingdom, pleasures, and enjoyments, even dominion over the three worlds. Lord Krishna seizes this opportune moment when Arjuna's mind was filled with the thought of absolute renunciation and teaches the highest Brahmavidya. Hence Arjuna's despondency is transformed into a *Yoga.*

Arjuna yearned to know what was *Dharma,* having given up all dominion, pleasures and enjoyment. Hence it is *Yoga.* Such deep renunciation is essential for all seekers after truth. It ultimately leads to righteousness and union with God. Dispassion for earthly enjoymets and burning passion for truth are the 'sine quanon' of spiritual life. It is this passion for truth that drives the aspirant forward on the path of spiritual realisation. Arjuna experienced the two feelings in the present situation. So he is fully qualified to realise the teaching of the Lord. If any man, for any reason, is prompted by feelings of dispassion for earthly objects, and a yearning for truth, he receives the Grace of God by which he comes to know the Truth and attains peace and blessedness.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे अर्जुनविषादयोगो नाम
प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu Brahmavidyayam
yoga sastre Sri Krishna juna Samvade Arjuna
Vishadayogo nama prathamodhyayah

Thus, in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the scripture of yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the First Discourse, entitled - Arjuna Vishada yoga - The Yoga of the Despondency of Arjuna

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श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

Atha Dvitiyodhyayah

THE SECOND DISCOURSE

सांख्य योगः

SAMKHYA YOGA

THE YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

The title of the Discourse :

Samkhya Yoga. That which is connected with samkhya (number) is Samkhya. In the investigation of the Eternal, it is necessary to enumerate the number of all the ephemeral and impermanent elements, and so it is called Samkhya. To know the twenty four or ninety six phenomenal modifications, and reject them all as non-eternal, and find out the Eternal witness of all Nature is what is called *Samkhya Vidya.* As, in this chapter, the nature of *Atma* is fully described, as the impermanance of the body composed of the five elements is enunciated, as many aspects of supreme knowledge are referred to, it is entitled Samkhya Yoga.

Important points of the Discourse :

1) Arjuna explains his mental distress and confusion and surrenders to Lord Krishna for guidance. (1-10)
2) Description of *Atma*. (11-30)
3) The necessity to fight the battle according to *Kshatriya Dharma*. (31-38)
4) The doctrine of *Nishkama Karma.* (39-53)
5) The man of steadfast wisdom. (54-72)

How this chapter is connected with the previous chapter :— The first chapter describes how Lord Krishna drove the chariot forward and stopped it in the middle of the two armies, how Arjuna was perplexed and filled with grief at the sight of his kinsmen, friends, and teachers with whom he had to fight, and how, in a mood of confusion and despair, he cast away his great bow and sat down in the chariot refusing to fight the battle. Lord Krishna observes the mental condition of his disciple, and in order to inspire him with courage and firmness of mind to carry out his duty, teaches him the Eternal Reality of *Atma*, and the secret of work. This is the subject matter of the Second Discourse.

Sanjaya continues the description of Arjuna's mental distress, and what Lord Krishna said to him afterwards.

संजय उवाच

1. तं तथा कृपयाऽऽविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम्
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १

Samjaya uvacha

Tam tatha kripayavishtam asrupurnakulekshanam ।
Vishidantam idam vakyam uvacha madhusudanah ॥ 1

संजय उवाच *samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : तथा *tatha* : thus, कृपया *kripaya* : by pity, आविष्टम् *avishtam* : filled, अश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् *asru purnakulekshanam* : with eyes blurred with tears, विषीदन्तम् *vishidantam* : sorrowing, तम् *tam* : Arjuna, मधुसूदनः *madhusudanah* : Krishna, इदम् वाक्यम् *idam vakyam* : this speech, उवाच *uvacha* : said, spoke.

Substance : In this manner, when Arjuna was plunged in a state of despondency, with eyes blurred with tears, Lord Krishna addressed this speech to him.

Commentary : *With eyes blurred with tears* : This is the sign of intense dispassion. All earthly attachments and family pleasures and the glories and enjoyments of dominion, appear worthless trash, and Arjuna yearns to escape from the bondage which keeps him like a prisoner in a dark cell. There is only one thought for the prisoner, and that is to regain his freedom and to see the light. So feels the ignorant man, when he is burdened with the weight of sorrow. Such is the experience of Arjuna. It is the first and the foremost qualification for receiving the highest knowledge. One who does not possess this intense dispassion cannot receive the supreme knowledge. Even if it is taught to him, he cannot understand it. It is wasted in the same way as one attempts to dye a dirty piece of cloth. Thus we come to know that Arjuna qualified himself for supreme wisdom by his intense dispassion in the present situation.

Filled with pity : Kindness is no doubt a great quality. But there are situations when kindness becomes a mental weakness. To be moved with pity after deciding to fight a righteous war for establishing *Dharma*, is not nobility of human nature, but a weak state of mind that is not capable of standing up to the strain of duty and righteous action. For the Kshatriya a righteous war for the sake of justice is a duty. Arjuna was moved by a feeling which amounts to a weak wavering state of mind and it is against this weakness that Lord Krishna's exhortation is directed. The blessed Lord makes it clear to Arjuna that this is not the occasion and these are not the people for whom he should feel this kind of pity. As a Kshatriya, it is Arjuna's duty to fight the battle.

Madhusudanah : Lord Krishna acquired this name by killing the demon called 'Madhu'. Madhu also means honey. Man's ego, the pleasures of the body and the senses are like honey when they are first enjoyed, and afterwards they torment him like poison. So one should renounce them. Then man becomes Madhusudana.

Lord Krishna inspires strength and courage to Arjuna in his present state of weakness and sorrow.

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यम् अकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Kutastva kasmalam idam visame samupasthitam ।
Anaryajushtam asvargyam akirtikaram arjuna । 2

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* O Arjuna!, अनार्यजुष्टम् *anaryajushtam* : unworthy, अस्वर्ग्यम् *asvargyam* heaven-excluding, अकीर्तिकरम् *akirtikaram* : shameful, इदम् *idam* : this, कश्मलम् *kasmalam* : dejection, विषमे *vishame* : in perilous straits, त्वा *tva* : upon thee, कुतः *kutah* : whence, समुपस्थितम् *samupasthitam* : taken hold.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna! Whence, in this critical situation, has this mental dejection taken hold of you, unworthy, shameful and Heaven-excluding ?

Commentary : *Dejection* : Lord Krishna describes the mental weakness of Arjuna as dirty and wretched. In the same way as dirt covers the physical body the mind becomes impure by sorrow, fear, distress, and hatred. And even as one washes the body by cleansing material, one should clean the mind by the knowledge of *Atma*. Arjuna's mental filth was washed off by the Lord's teaching. It is the duty of every individual to purify the mind-stuff of its ignorance and passion by a study of the Gita.

Unworthy : There are two types of men in the world–the wise and the ignorant. Those who follow the righteous path, who seek for light and purity, who are bold and active, are the wise. This is the Aryan way of life. The other category of men live in ignorance, are subject to dark passions, follow the demonic way, and fall into sorrow and despair. This is the

un Aryan way of life. It behoves every one to question himself whether he belongs to the former or later class of men, and strive to attain to the level of the wise by determined effort.

Question : *What are weakness, sorrow, and fear ?*

Answer : They are the dirt of the mind. The ignorant fall a prey to them. They pull down man from ascending to higher levels of existence. They bring shame and disgrace.

3. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ ३

Klaibyam ma smagamah partha nai 'tat tvayy upapadyate ।
Kshudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktvo 'ttistha paramtapa । 3

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : Oh Arjuna ! क्लैब्यम् *klaibyam* : impotence, मास्मगमः *ma smagamah* : do not yield to, एतत् *etat* : this, त्वयि *tvayi* : in you, न उपपद्यते *na upapadyate* : is not fit, परन्तप *Parantapa* : Oh scorcher of enemies, क्षुद्रम् *kshudram* : mean, हृदयदौर्बल्यम् *hridaya daurbalyam* weak-heartedness, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : giving up, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishta* : arise.

Substance : O Arjuna! Do not yield to impotence. It does not befit you. Cast off this wretched weakness of heart. Arise, O scorcher of enemies !

Commentary : *Impotence* : Impotence and weakness are characteristics of a eunach. It is the meanest quality in man. So the Lord ridicules Arjuna for such weakness, and exhorts him not to yield to it.

Courage and fearlessness are the first virtues in man. All other good qualities are acquired through them Therefore in the 16th Chapter, the Lord mentions fearlessness (abhayam) as the first of the twenty six virtues which constitute the 'daivasampada'.

Enthusiasm, daring, courage, right decision, power and heroism - wherever these six qualities exist, there the Gods dwell Otherwise, why should the Lord, when he opens his lips to speak, enunciate fearlessness as the first of all virtues on

the spiritual path? It is this great 'mantra' of fearlessness that came out as the first utterance of the Lord Though the teacher of the Gita presents various creeds in the course of his message, he insists upon fearlessness as the basic virtue common to all paths of religion. Arjuna's mental disease has assumed a dangerous form, and the great physician, the blessed Lord, takes out of the medicine-case this powerful medicine 'fear·lessness' and administers it to Arjuna at the very outset. Arjuna's disease is weakness caused by sorrow and delusion and the Lord's antidote is absolute strength and courage born out of the knowledge of *Atma*.

Arise : "Uttishtata, Jagrata, Prapya varan nibhodhata !!!" Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. So the Upanishads exhort mankind. Likewise the Lord exhorts Arjuna : "Stand up, be a man of action, do your duty."

Scorcher of enemies : This epithet is significant. Arjuna has defeated several external enemies on the battle-field. He is now confronted with unseen internal enemies, sorrow and delusion. The Lord inspires Arjuna to conquer them, as he conquered other enemies.

Arjuna continues his lamentation.

अर्जुन उवाच

4. कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ ४

Arjuna uvacha

Katham bhismam aham samkhye dronam cha madhusudana ।
Ishubhih pratiyotsyami pujarhav arisudana ॥

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said.

Meaning : अरिसूदन *arisudana* : O Krishna, slayer of enemies, मधुसूदन *madhusudana* O Krishna!, पूजार्हौ *pujarhav* : fit to be worshipped, भीष्मम् *bhishma* : Bhishma, द्रोणंच *dronam cha* : and Drona, संख्ये *sankhye* : in the battle, अहम् *aham* : I, इषुभिः *ishubhih* : with arrows, कथम् *katham* : how, प्रतियोत्स्यामि *pratiyotsyami* : attack.

Substance : *Arjuna said* : O Krishna! Bhishma and Drona are my teachers fit to be worshipped. How can I attack them with arrows in the battle?

Commentary : We can understand from this how much reverence Arjuna had for his teachers though they happened to fight on the side of his enemies.

5. गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान्रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५

Gurun ahatva hi mahanubhavan
Sreyo bhoktum bhaiksyam api 'ha loke ।
Hatva 'rthakamams tu gurun ihai'va
Bhunjiya bhogan rudhirapradigdhan ॥ 5

Meaning: महानुभावान् *mahanubhavan* : most noble, गुरून् *gurun* : teachers, अहत्वा *ahatva hi* : without killing indeed, इहलोके *iha loke* : in this world, भैक्षम् *bhaiksham* : alms, अपि *api* even, भोक्तुम् *bhoktum* : to eat, श्रेयः हि *sreyoh hi* : better, गुरून् *gurun* : teachers, हत्वातु *hatva tu* : (then) having slain, इहैव *ihaiva* : even here, रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् *rudhirapradigdhan* : stained with blood, अर्थकामान् *arthakamam* : desires and pleasures, भोगान् *bhogan* : enjoyments, भुञ्जीय *bhunjina* : enjoy.

Substance : Better it is in this world to live on the food of beggary than to kill my most noble teachers. But if I kill them here I could enjoy only such pleasures as are stained with blood.

6. न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६

Na chai 'tad vidmah kataranno gariyo
yad va jayema yadi va no jayeyuh ।
Yan eva hatva na jijivisamas
te 'vasthitah pramukhe dhartarastrah ॥ 6

Meaning : नः *nah* : for us, कतरत् *katarat* : which, गरीयः *gariyah* : better, एतत् च *Etat cha* : this, नच *na cha* : and not, विद्मः *vidmah* (we) know, जयेम *jayema va* : we should conquer, यद्वा *yad va* : or if, नः *nah* : us, जयेयुः यदि वा *jayeyah* : they should conquer, यान् *yaneva* whom, हत्वा *hatva* : having slain, नजिजीविषामः *na jijivishamah* : (we) do not wish to live, ते धार्तराष्ट्राः एव *te dhartarashtrah* : even those Kauravas, प्रमुखे *pramukhe* : in front, अवस्थिताः *avastitah* : are standing.

Substance : And further I can hardly say whether it is better for us that we should conquer them, or that they should conquer us. Those very people killing whom we do not wish to live, the sons of Dhritarashtra, are standing in front of us.

Not knowing what to decide and how to act Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna.

7. कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ ७

Karpanyadosopahatasvabhavah
pricchami tvam dharmasammudhachetah ।
yacchreyah syannischitam bruhi tan me
sisyas te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam ॥ 7

Meaning : कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः *karpanyadoshopahatasva-bhavah* : with mind distracted by pity, धर्मसंमूढचेताः *dharmasammu-dhachetah* : ignorant of (my) righteous duty, त्वाम् *tvam* : to thee, पृच्छामि *pricchami* : I ask, यत् *yat* : what, निश्चितम् *nischitam* : decisively, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, स्यात् *syat* : may be, तत् *tat* : that, मे *me* : to me, ब्रूहि *bruhi* : say, अहम् *aham* : I, ते *te* : to you, शिष्यः *sishyah* : am disciple, त्वाम् *tvam* : to thee, प्रपन्नम् *prapa-nnam* : take refuge, माम् *mam* : me, शाधि *sadhi* : teach.

Substance : (O Krishna!) My mind is distracted by the taint of pity and I am ignorant of what my duty is, and so, I ask you to teach me what is good for me. I am your disciple. I take refuge in you.

Commentary : *Karpanyadoshah* : 'Kripanah' commonly means a greedy man, a beggar. It means also a man ignorant of the knowledge of *Atma*.

The first meaning does not apply to Arjuna, for he was never known to be greedy or a beggarly spirit. Therefore the word should here mean ignorance according to the meaning given in the Upanishadas.

In the first discourse Arjuna speaks. Krishna listens and remains silent. Arjuna speaks of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, as if he knew the secret laws of righteousness and action. Still Krishna remains silent. Perhaps the Lord thought that he should not speak till Arjuna asked him to know the truth.

But Arjuna was not a common man. He understood his state of mind and the terrible perplexity and despair into which he was plunged by the tremendous responsibility of the situation. He realised that his own estimate of the situation was not all true as his mind was distracted by sorrow and despondency. So he stops the flow of his own obsessed thoughts and feelings, and simply surrenders to the Lord, to enlighten him and show the right path of action. He assumes the correct position of a humble disciple. The divine Master was pleased with Arjuna's humility. So it is in the relation between all disciples and teachers. The more humble the disciple is, the greater is the love of the surrendered to the Lord with complete faith; Arjuna sought for light and guidence. The Lord at once took upon himself the responsibility of a *Guru*. He taught him the highest wisdom. He cleared all doubts and answered the questions. He revealed his universal form (Visvarupa) and in every way pulled up the sinking Arjuna from the slough of despondency. Arjuna did a great service to humanity by his self-surrender, for the Lord had then the proper occasion to deliver the message of the Gita to mankind. Let all seekers understand the inner meaning and significance of the subtle relations between the disciple and the master.

Mind distracted : Nature in its own original state is pure in every man. It becomes defoiled and impure by bad elements like lust, greed and hatred. Without these defiling

elements, man's nature is verily divine and spiritual. The whole attempt of religion is to show the way how to bring back the mind to its original state of purity. The position of Arjuna is not the impurity of lust or greed, or hatred, but of ignorance which rendered him incapable of deciding the great problem of righteous action in that critical situation. The unwise do not seek for a remedy even though all of them pass through the same state of perplexity and confusion in solving the problem of life. On the other hand, Arjuna discovered his mental weakness and immediately sought for a remedy. What is that remedy? - Taking refuge in the *Guru*. Who is that *Guru*? the Blessed Lord Krishna himself. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord and appealed to him, "I am your disciple, command me what I should do?". He fell at the feet of the Lord. His egoism vanished. This is the surest path to spiritual realisation. This is the ship that takes the bound soul across the ocean of 'samsara'. The *Guru* is the expert pilot. If he is at the helm, there is no danger of any storm or tempest in life. He takes the disciple who has taken refuge in him safely through all dangers to the heaven of peace and freedom Therefore the aspirants should surrender to a competent *Guru* and practice the virtue of humility. Then they receive illumination and realise the Supreme.

Arjuna confesses that he finds no other way but surrender to the Lord to transcend his sorrow.

8. न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद् यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८

Na hi prapasyami mamapanudyad
Yac chokam ucchoshanam indriyanam ।
Avapya bhumavasapatnamriddham
Rajyam suranam api chadhipatyam ॥ 8

Meaning: भूमौ *bhumam* : in the world, असपत्नम् *asapatnam* : without rivals, ऋद्धम् *riddham* : prosperous, राज्यम् *rajyam* : kingdom, सुराणाम् *suranam* : of the gods, आधिपत्यम् *adhipatyam* : dominion, अवाप्य अपि *avapya api* : possessing even, इन्द्रियाणाम् *indriyanam* : of the senses, उच्छोषणम् *ucchoshanam* : withering, मम शोकम् *mama sokam* : my sorrow, यत् *yat* : that, अपनुद्यात् *apanudyat* : would remove, नहि प्रपश्यामि *nahi prapasyami* : I do not see.

Substance: Though possessing prosperous kingdom free from rivals, and holding even power over the gods, I do not yet see what could remove this sorrow of mine which burns up my senses.

Commentary: Though a man possess all the power and prosperity in the world, and even acquire lordship over the gods, yet it cannot remove the distractions of the mind. The disease of the mind cannot abate by feeding it with greater wealth, power and position To discover this truth is the very first step on the spiritual path. Arjuna understood it clearly. So he confesses that power and lordship over the three worlds cannot remove the withering sorrow. The storm does not abate. The only cure for all diseases of the mind is the knowledge of *Atma*. It is this supreme panacea which Lord Krishna offers to Arjuna. Therefore it is clear that what one should strive for in this life is not power or position or enjoyment but the knowledge of the Supreme Self.

Sanjaya narrates what Arjuna did afterwards.

संजय उवाच

9. एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दं उक्त्वा तूर्ष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९

Samjaya uvacha

Evam uktva hrishikesam gudakesah paramtapah ।
Na yotsya iti govindam uktva tushnim babhuvaha ॥ 9

संजय उवाच *Samjaya uvacha* : Sanjaya said.

Meaning : परंतपः *paramtapah* : destroyer of foes, गुडाकेशः *gudakesah* : Arjuna, हृषीकेशम् *hrishikesham* : to Krishna, एवम् उक्त्वा *evam uktva* : thus having spoken, नयोत्स्ये *na yotsya* : I will not fight, इति *iti* : thus, गोविन्दम् *govindam* : to Krishna, उक्त्वा

elements, man's nature is verily divine and spiritual. The whole attempt of religion is to show the way how to bring back the mind to its original state of purity. The position of Arjuna is not the impurity of lust or greed, or hatred, but of ignorance which rendered him incapable of deciding the great problem of righteous action in that critical situation. The unwise do not seek for a remedy even though all of them pass through the same state of perplexity and confusion in solving the problem of life. On the other hand, Arjuna discovered his mental weakness and immediately sought for a remedy. What is that remedy? – Taking refuge in the *Guru*. Who is that *Guru*? the Blessed Lord Krishna himself. Arjuna surrendered to the Lord and appealed to him, "I am your disciple, command me what I should do?". He fell at the feet of the Lord. His egoism vanished. This is the surest path to spiritual realisation. This is the ship that takes the bound soul across the ocean of 'samsara'. The *Guru* is the expert pilot. If he is at the helm, there is no danger of any storm or tempest in life. He takes the disciple who has taken refuge in him safely through all dangers to the heaven of peace and freedom Therefore the aspirants should surrender to a competent *Guru* and practice the virtue of humility. Then they receive illumination and realise the Supreme.

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Substance: Though possessing prosperous kingdom free from rivals, and holding even power over the gods, I do not yet see what could remove this sorrow of mine which burns up my senses.

Commentary: Though a man possess all the power and prosperity in the world, and even acquire lordship over the gods, yet it cannot remove the distractions of the mind. The disease of the mind cannot abate by feeding it with greater wealth, power and position To discover this truth is the very first step on the spiritual path. Arjuna understood it clearly. So he confesses that power and lordship over the three worlds cannot remove the withering sorrow. The storm does not abate. The only cure for all diseases of the mind is the knowledge of *Atma*. It is this supreme panacea which Lord Krishna offers to Arjuna. Therefore it is clear that what one should strive for in this life is not power or position or enjoyment but the knowledge of the Supreme Self.

Sanjaya narrates what Arjuna did afterwards.

संजय उवाच

9. एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दं उक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९

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uktva : having spoken, तूष्णीम् *tushnim* : silent, बभूवह *babhuvaha* : became.

Substance : Sanjaya said : Having spoke thus, Arjuna, the destroyer of foes, finally said to Lord Krishna, "I will not fight" and became silent

Sanjaya narrates what Krishna did then.

10. तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ १०

Tam uvacha hrisikesah prahasann ivabharata
Senayor ubhayor madhye visidantam idam vachah ॥ 10

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Dhritarashtra, सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये *senayor ubhayor madhye* : in the middle of the two armies, विषीदन्तम् *vishidantam* : to the sorrowing, तम् *tam* : Arjuna (him), हृषीकेशः *hrishikesah* : Krishna, प्रहसन्निव *prahasan niva* as if laughing, इदम् वचः *idam vachah* : this word. उवाच *uvacha* : said.

Substance : O King Dhritarashtra! seeing Arjuna lamenting in the middle of the two armies, Lord Krishna, as if laughing loud, spoke thus to him.

Commentary : *As if laughing* : 'Hasan' means laughing, 'prahasan' means laughing loud. The man of knowledge is generally amused when he hears the talk of the ignorant and observes what they say and do. Arjuna was caught in the grip of sorrow as he did not understand the hidden laws of *Dharma*. Lord Krishna was the very embodiment of knowledge and *Dharma*. Therefore the specious arguments of Arjuna, the spurious feelings of pity and compassion, the mental distraction, and physical collapse of Arjuna, raised a smile on the lips of the Lord Those who have not transcended 'avidya' suffer from a false identification with the creations of 'Maya', the body and mind and other worldly objects. The man of knowledge on the other hand knows that he is never contaminated by the modifications of the body and mind, and looks at them from the vantage point of a disinterested spectator.

That is the difference between the wise and the ignorant. When a man sees a rope and knows it as only a rope, he is naturally amused to see a man of defective sight who takes the rope to be a snake and jumps about in fear and confusion. The father laughs at the peculiar ideas and behaviour of his little children. So does the wise men smile at the fanciful theories and conduct of the ignorant. To the ignorant, 'goshpadam sagarayate' – a span of ground appears like an ocean, and to the wise 'sagaram goshpadayate' – the ocean becomes a span of ground. Lord Krishna was the master of *Yoga* and *Jnana*. To him Arjuna's peculiar argumentation, his bodily and mental agitation appeared laughable. So a smile beautified the sublime features of the Lord when he observed the mental acrobatics of his former friend and present disciple. Look at this picture and that – the wailing Arjuna and the smiling Lord. Such exactly is the difference between the wise and the ignorant.

The Lord speaks. Sanjaya now records the teaching of Lord Krishna, who first of all asserts that there is no one for whom there need be sorrow.

श्री भगवानुवाच

11. अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Asochyananvasochastvam prajnavadamscha bhashase
Gatasunagatasumscha nanusochanti panditah ।

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : you, अशोच्यान् *asochyan* : those who should not be grieved for, अन्वशोचः *anvasochah* : have grieved, प्रज्ञावादांश्च *prajnavadam cha* : and words of wisdom, भाषसे *bhashase* : speak, पण्डिताः *panditah* : the wise, गतासून् *gatasun* : the dead, अगतासूंश्च *agatasums cha* : and the living, नानुशोचन्ति *nanusochanti* : grieve not,

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna !

You grieve for those for whom there need be no sorrow, yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for the dead or the living.

Commentary : The teaching of the Gita starts from this *Sloka*. So in the Gita-Sastra, this verse is regarded as the seed or source ('Bija')

Just as the whole tree is involved in the seed, the whole of the 'Gita Sastra' is implied in this *Sloka*.

The message of the Gita starts with the word 'Asochyan' and ends with the words 'ma suchah' (do not grieve). So it appears that the main purpose of the Gita teaching is "the removal of sorrow."

Those who should not be grieved for : Every object in the world has five aspects : (1) existence, (2) light, (3) joy, (4) name, and (5) form. Of these the first three – existence, light, and joy (*sat*, *chit*, *ananda*) are real and eternal. The later two, name and form (*nama* and *rupa*) are unreal and transitory. The first three constitute the real nature of man, and not name and form. But such is the power of ignorance ('avidya') that man sees, knows and clings to the later two only – namely name and form. The first three are not directly seen, though they are experienced every moment of life. Thus, if we analyse and go a little deeper into the real nature of man, we find that it is indestructible and eternal. Only the later two go on continuously changing from time to time. Therefore, since the real man is eternal, one need not weep and wail for the modifications of name and form which he observes in life and death. When the real man is deathless, for whom should we grieve, and for what? That is the Lord's position.

Words of wisdom : Intellectual arguments are conceived by *Buddhi*, by which power man comes to decisions after due consideration. But the intellect is finite It operates within a limited range. It cannot go beyond the *buddhi*.

Buddhi, and the intellect are parts of nature, and they are subject to errors and mistakes in their concepts and conclusions. But it is different with men who have crossed the border land of the intellect, and entered the realm of *Atma* – the super-conscious state. He alone knows and speaks the truth. Arjuna did not attain that state. So he measures every thing with the yardstick of his own deluded intellect. His arguments not to fight the battle are of this nature. Lord Krishna dismisses them all in one suggestive phrase ('Prajnavadah') and proceeds to state the ultimate position.

The wise : Ordinarily a Pandit is one who is well-versed in the languages and literature, poetry and scripture, logic and oratory. But the Lord here gives a new definition for the word. He is a pandit who grieves not either for the living or the dead.

Again in the 4th Chapter, Pandit is described as one who has burnt up all actions in the fire of 'Jnana'.

And again in the 5th Chapter, the Pandit is described as one who looks upon all with an equal eye.

So the word should be understood in the higher sense of a man of wisdom. It is necessary that, besides mere learning and book-knowledge he should attain the knowledge of *Atma* and receive the grace of God.

Question : *Who is a Pandit ?*

Answer : He who does not grieve for the living or the dead or for any object in the world is a Pandit.

The Lord lays down the law of the immortality of Atma.

12. न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ १२

Na tveva'ham jatu na'sam na tvam ne'me janadhipah ।
Na cai'va na bhavishyamah sarve vayam atah param ॥ 12

Meaning : अहम् *aham* : I, जातु *jatu* : at any time, नासम् *nasam* : was not, नत्वेव *natveva* : never was, त्वम् *tvam* : you, न *na* (*na asih iti*) : never was not, इमे *ime* : these, जनाधिपाः *janadhipah* : kings, न *na* (*na asih iti*) : never were not, अतः परम् *atah*

param : hereafter, वयम् सर्वे *vayam sarve* : all of us, नभविष्यामः *nabhavishyamah* : would not be in future, च *cha* : and, नएव *na eva* : never also.

Substance : (O Arjuna!) Myself, you and all these Kings here never were not in the past, and never would not be in the future.

Commentary : Through this verse, the Lord teaches the 'Mahavakya' 'tat tvam asi' (Thou art That). 'I', 'you' and all beings in the world are all forms of the one Supreme Self. So the individual being and the Supreme Being are not two separate entities, but one and only one. This is the most secret of all spiritual secrets. This is the essence of *Brahma Jnana*. Since Arjuna renounced all the powers and pleasures of the three worlds, Lord Krishna considered him fit to receive the supreme knowledge, and so begins to teach the highest Truth.

Three important facts come out in the Lord's declaration that all beings are eternal—

1) *Atma* is eternal,
2) Each individual being is *Atma*, and not the body with name and form,
3) The one *Atma* pervades all beings in the world.

This teaching inspires tremendous strength and courage. When a man comes to know that he and others essentially do not perish, there is no cause for grief at all. Death is then regarded as only a change of name and form. When the seed breaks up and grows into a plant, there is no need for grief at all. The name and form of the seed have disappeared, but it is there in the form of a plant. Lord Krishna found out the root cause of Arjuna's grief and sorrow, and he knew that the knowledge of *Atma* alone could put an end to all weakness and despondency. So he starts his teaching with the tremendous affirmation of the immortality of the Soul and the deathlessness of the individual being.

All of us hereafter : 'all of us'—From the point of view of the Supreme Self, there is no separation between God, Guru, and the common man. All belong to the same eternal existence.

So we find that Anjaneya speaking to Sri Rama says: ('Atma budhya tvamevaham'). The indivudual being manifesting as the ego is the result of the limitations of the body, mind and senses. When these limitations are discarded, the so-called individual being, the ego, becomes veritably the all-pervading Supreme Self. That is the Reality. Knowing that he is the immortal *Atma*, where is sorrow, where is weakness? Thus the Lord inspires Arjuna with courage born of knowledge.

Question : *Who is Jiva?*

Answer : The *Atman* conditioned by the body, mind, and senses is *Jiva*.

Question : *What is Atma?*

Answer : The unconditioned Self is *Atma*. It exists in the present, the past, and the future. It is deathless and eternal.

Question : *Does this apply only to a few?*

Answer : No. From the creating 'Brhama' down to the meanest insect, it applies to all alike. All beings without exception are the *Atma* and not anything else.

The Atma exists even after the death of the body.

13. देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ १३

Dehino'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yavvanam jara ।
Tatha dehantarapraptir dhiras tatra na muhyati ॥ 13

Meaning : देहिनः *dehinaha* : for the embodied being, अस्मिन्देहे *asmindehe* : in this body, कौमारम् *kaumaram* : boyhood, यौवनम् *yavvanam* : youth, जरा *jara* : old age, यथा *yatha* : as, तथा *tatha* : so, देहान्तरप्राप्तिः *dehantarapraptih* : the attaining of another body, तत्र *tatra* : thereat, धीरः *dhirah* : the firm man, नमुह्यति

Substance : Just as man in this body passes through the various stages of boyhood, youth and old age, like so, he passes into another body after death. The wise know it and are not deluded.

Commentary : Boyhood, youth, old age, and migrating into another body – these four stages are inevitable for the embodied being.

In the body : It is made clear that these changes affect the body and not the *Atma*. When from boyhood one passes to youth, and from youth to age, he does not grieve. No one grieves when the seed dies as it is giving birth to the plant. And so, the Lord questions why one should grieve when the body falls and another is taken up by the individual being. The wise who know the secret remain firm when these changes overtake the body. The first three stages are seen and known by all, but the fourth change is unseen and so it is looked upon with a feeling of awe and wonder. But the Lord points out that even this change is just like the former and not in the least different from them. So he exhorts every one to know the truth and be fearless. It should however be remembered that the *Jnani* whose 'karmic' force is already exhausted has no need to take another body. The common man is subject to the law of rebirth to work out his *karma* till the last when he too becomes free.

Cycle of the body :

Boyhood — Youth — Old Age — Rebirth.

The cycle rotates inevitably so long as the *karma* force works. When it is neutralised and destroyed by knowledge, the man is freed from the cycle of birth and death. This is liberation (*Moksha*).

Question : *What are the changes for the embodied being ?*

Answer : Boyhood, youth, old age and rebirth in a different body, are the changes.

Question : *Who is the man of courage ?*

Answer : He is the man of courage who does not grieve wh.n these modifications overtake the body, when man dies and passes into another body.

Heat and cold, pain and pleasure are temporary phenomena. Endure them

14. मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४

Matrasparsas tu kaunteya sitoshna sukhaduhkhadah ।
Agamapayino 'nityah tam stitikshasva bharata ॥ 14

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : Arjuna (son of Kunti), मात्रास्पर्शास्तु *matrasparsastu* : contact of the senses with objects indeed, शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः *sitoshnasukhadukhadah* : producers of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, आगमापायिनः *agamapayanah* : with beginning and end, अनित्याः *anityah* : transitory, तान् *tan* : them, भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna !, तितिक्षस्व *titikshasva* : endure.

Substance : Contact of the senses with objects produce heat and cold, pain and pleasure. These experiences come and go, and are impermanent. Endure them, O Arjuna.

Commentary : Those who do not know that the world is a great illusion consider that the experiences of the senses and the mind are real, and super-impose them on themselves and suffer all-through their life. But those who know that these modifications belong to the realm of the body only, and that the Self remains untroubled and uncontaminated by them, are free from pleasure and pain, and such men live always in a state of happiness. However, so long as man is in the embodied state, even the *Jnani* must go through the physical changes. But since he knows the sharp distinction between the body and *Atma*, his attitude to them is entirely different from that of the ignorant man. So the Lord's command is 'endure them'. ('Titikshasva') There is no other way.

Producers of pleasure and pain : The pleasure experienced by the senses is not pure pleasure. It is mixed with pain. If it is a pure pleasure, it should not have any touch of pain either before or afterwards. Elsewhere in the Gita it is said

that the pleasures derived through contact of the senses with worldly objects are themselves the source of pain. Common experience is also the same. The same thing causes pain and pleasure under different circumstances, in varying degrees. There can be no such thing as pleasure apart from pain. They are the two sides of the same coin. They are called 'dvandvas' -pairs of opposites, which always go together. So the Lord speaks of them together as producers of pleasure and pain (sukhadukhadah).

With beginning and end : When wordly pleasures come no one need be elated, for their nature is not simply to appear but to disappear also, and where there is elation there should be depression. Pleasures come as guests and again depart. They are transitory and short-lived. Therefore one should not get himself attached to them. Such attachment will always lead to pain when they disappear, and it is absolutely certain that they disappear in course of time. He is then the 'dhira' – the man of courage, who is disinterested in them, and feels no attraction for them. The foolish man is deluded by the superficial attractions offered by sense-objects, runs after them, and gets himself caught in the whirlpool of *Samsara*. And besides, even a casual observer knows that, not desired by him, several painful things come to him by the power of providence in the cyclic motion of time, and he should be in a position to conclude that even pleasures would come similarly through time, and precious life need not be wasted for obtaining such pleasures. The duty of every thoughtful man is to seek for Truth in the midst of this changing phenomena, and the unadulterated *Ananda* which is pure and perfect and which brings no pain in its wake. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to seek for such permanent joy.

Endure : Endure them (Titikshasva). This is one of the great *mantras* of the Gita. Man should be equal-minded when cold and heat, pleasure and pain, come in the form of an endless chain. So long as man has the body, they come. No one can stop them. So the Lord gives the *satvic* law (titikshasva) -endure them. Like *sama* and *dama*–control of the internal and external organs, 'titiksha' – endurance is an absolutely necessary qualification for the spiritual seeker.

Question : *What is the nature of sence-experiences ?*

Answer : They produce heat and cold, pleasure and pain. They come and go. They are impermanent.

Question : *What should one do when they come ?*

Answer : He should endure them with an equal mind and remain calm and unmoved.

Lord Krishna declares the fruit of such equanimity of mind.

15. यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५

Yam hi na vyathayantyete purusham purusharshabha ।
Sama duhkha sukham dhiram so'mritatvaya kalpate ॥ 15

Meaning : पुरुषर्षभ *purusharshabha* : chief among mortals, O Arjuna !, एते *ete* : these, समदुःखसुखम् *samaduhkhasukham* : equal in pain and pleasure, धीरम् *dhiram* : firm, यम् *yam* : whom, पुरुषम् *purusham* : man, नव्यथयन्ति *na vythayante* : do not affect, सः हि *sah hi* : he, surely, अमृतत्वाय *amritatvaya* : for immortality, कल्पते *kalpate* : is fit.

Substance : The firm man who is not affected by pain and pleasure, who remains equal-minded, surely is fit for immortality, O Arjuna, Chief of mortals !

Commentary : *Chief among mortals* : He who has controlled the senses, who is not attracted by worldly objects, and who is equal-minded in pain and pleasure, is the best of men. Worldly greatness is not enough, but along with it one should acquire spiritual excellence also. Then alone he becomes the chief among mortals. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to acquire spiritual greatness, and so he addresses him as 'chief among mortals' – ('Purusharshabha.')

Equal in pain and pleasure :- Firmness of character implies equanimity of mind under all conditions of pain and pleasure. He is firmly fixed in *Atma* who feels that the pairs of

opposites ('dvandas') are only modifications of the body and mind. Pleasure is only a wave of the mind, and pain is also a wave of the mind. The *Atma* is above the mind. It is a witness of these changes. So the firm man is indifferent to them, like Suka in the court of Janaka.

He is fit for immortality :- Liberation is known as immortality. The world of name and form is dead matter, *Jada.* It is subject to birth and death. The state of *Atma* is deathless. So liberation is not something to be acquired fresh by man, but it is his essential nature. It is not something existing in the Heaven or sky· It is immortality here and now and for ever. He who attains this state does not come under the power of death. He has no need to take a body again.

Fitness for *Moksha* is not here confined to any race, religion or caste· The Lord simply says that the man of heroic endurance and equal-mindedness is alone {fit for liberation. There is no distinction of caste or creed.

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : The state of happiness 'ananda' is *Moksha.*

Question : *Who can attain it ?*

Answer : He who is not drawn by sence-objects, who is firm and equal-minded in pain and pleasure attains it.

Question : *Who is a firm man (dhira) ?*

Answer : The man of equanimity in life and death, in the midst of all the tremendous agitations of life, is entitled to be called a firm man ('dhira').

The Lord defines what is real and what is unreal.

16. नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६

na'sato vidyate bhavo na'bhavo vidyate satah ।
ubhayorapi dristo 'ntastvanayo stattvadarsibhih ॥ 16

Meaning : असतः *asatah* : of the unreal, भावः *bhavah* : being, नविद्यते *na vidyate* : is not, सतः *satah* · of the real, अभावः *abhavah* : non-being, नविद्यते *na vidyate :* is not, अनयोः *anayah* : of these, उभयोः *ubhayoh* : of the two, अपि *api* : also, अन्तः *antah* : the final truth, तु *tu* : indeed, तत्त्वदर्शिभिः *tatvadarsibhih* : by knowers of the truth, दृष्टः *drishtah* : is seen.

Substance : The unreal has no being, the real has no non-being. The final truth of these two has been seen indeed by those who have experienced the essence of things.

Knowers of the truth :- This refers to persons who have directly seen the final Truth. For them, it is no longer speculation or argument or more imagination, but direct perception. Such realised men understand clearly what is real and what is not real. The body and the world are subject to destruction, and so they are not the truth; They are non-existent· That which becomes non-existent cannot have a state of reality at any time. Even if it appears to be real, it is the reality of the mirage only. The *Atma* alone is real. At no time was it not. At no time will it cease to be· The man of knowledge knows the truth· Others who are ignorant confuse the two by ascribing reality to the unreal (body and the world) and denying the real, (the *Atman*). This confusion is the root cause of all sorrow and suffering for mankind.

To deny the existence of the real *Atma*, who alone is real, is the first error. To assert the existence of the unreal, body and world, is the second error. The first error is known as 'asambhavana' and the second error 'viparitabhavana'. By the first error, what is real vanishes and so the eternal *Atma* becomes something which is far away from us. By the second error what is palpably unreal is taken for the real and thus the ignorant man brings upon himself endless suffering and sorrow.

To end the sorrow, it is just enough for man to see the real as real, and the unreal as unreal. This is the way to peace and the removal of sorrow. The spiritual masters know the secret and hence they are filled with bliss· The ignorant man fails to see the Truth, and so he is caught in the whirlpool of 'samsara' and suffer endlessly·

In this verse, the Lord propounds the fundamental proposition of Vedanta – 'Brahma Satyam, Jagat midhya.'

Question : *Who are the seers of truth :*

Answer : Those who see that *Atma* alone is real and that the body and world are unreal, are the seers of Truth.

The nature of Sat :–

17\. अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७

Avinasi tu tadviddhi yena sarvamidam tatam ।
vinasa mavyayasya'sya na kaschit kartum arhati ॥ 17

Meaning : सर्वमिदम् *sarvam idam* : all this (world), येन *yena* : by which, ततम् *tatam* : is pervaded, तत्तु *tat tu* : that (*Atma*) indeed, अविनाशि *avinasi* : indestructable, विद्धि *viddhi* : know, अव्ययस्यास्य *avyasyasya* : of the imperishable (*Atma*), विनाशम् *vinasam* : destruction, कर्तुम् *kartum* : to do, नकश्चित् *na kaschit* : any one, अर्हति *arhati* : is not able.

Substance : (O Arjuna !) Know that *Atma* by which this whole universe is pervaded, is indestructable. No one can cause the destruction of the imperishable.

Commentary : Since every thing – the moving and the non–moving objects of the world – is pervaded by the Self, which is present in the heart of every individual, one should consider every object as the manifestation of the self and be full of love and kindness for all. He should not commit any sin, since *Atma*, the Lord, is present every where. Since nothing can cause the destruction of *Atma*, one should contemplate and strive to live in *Atma* without any kind of doubt or fear.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : *Atma* pervades the whole universe. It is imperishable. No one can cause its destruction.

The real is further explained in contrast with the unreal.

18\. अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८

Antavanta ime deha nityasyo'ktah saririnah ।
anasino 'prameyasya tasmadyudhyasva bharata ॥ 18

Meaning : नित्यस्य *nityasya* : of the real, अनाशिनः *anasinah* : of the indestructable, अप्रमेयस्य *aprameyasya* : of the incomprehensible, शरीरिणः *saririnah* : of the embodied, इमे *ime* : these, देहाः *dehah* : bodies, अन्तवन्तः *antavantah* : subject to end, उक्ताः *uktah* : are said, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, भारत *Bharata* : O Arjuna ! युध्यस्व *yudhyasva* : fight.

Substance : These bodies which belong to the real imperishable, unknowable *Atma* are said to be subject to end; therefore fight, O Arjuna !

Commentary : *Subject to end :–* These bodies are subject to death. You are not the body. You are *Atma*, the indweller, holding the body as a vehicle. So no one should depend on the perishable bodies. You should hold on to *Atma*, till you obtain the consciousness of your identity with *Atma*, and cut off the false identification with the body.

Of the embodied : *Atma* is not far away. He is in and pervading the body, but completely free and uncontaminated by all the modifications of the physical and subtle bodies. Man should constantly cultivate his identity with *Atma*, and reject the identity with the body ('dehatmabuddhi'), and remain as *Atma.*

Therefore fight : Since *Atma* is imperishable, and the bodies are subject to death now or hereafter, the Lord exhorts Arjuna to carry out his duty and fight the battle free from sorrow and fear. The Lord wants his disciple to act in the light of his knowledge of *Atma*, and the perishable nature of material things.

Question : *What is the nature of the body ?*

Answer : It is subject to dissolution and death.

Question : *What is Atma, the dweller of the body ?*

Answer : It is real, imperishable and unknowable by the senses and the mind.

Atma and its deathless nature is further explained :

19. य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
अभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९

Ya enam vetti hantaram yaschai'nam manyate hatam ।
ubhau tau na vijanito na 'yam hanti na hanyate ॥ 19

Meaning : यः *yah* : he who, एनम् *enam* : this (self), हन्तारम् *hantaram* : the slayer, वेत्ति *vetti* : knows, यश्च *yas cha* : and he who, एनम् *enam* : this (self), हतम् *hatam* : is slain, मन्यते *manyate* : thinks, उभौतौ *ubhouta* : these two, न विजानीतः *navijaniti* : do not know, अयम् *ayam* : this (self), न हन्ति *na hanti* : does not slay, न हन्यते *na hanyanti* : nor is slain.

Substance : He who thinks that *Atma* slays, or he who thinks that *Atma* is slain, both these do not know the Truth. *Atma* does not slay, nor is slain.

(1) Since *Atma* does not slay, it follows that *Atma* does not perform any action. It is actionless. It does not do any thing, nor does it prompt any thing to do. The sense of action and the feeling of activity belong to *Buddhi* only, and do not touch *Atma* which is beyond *Buddhi*. He is an ignorant man who ascribes action to *Atma*.

(2) *Atma* is imperishable and so it cannot be slain. It is eternal and unchanging. Therefore, the spiritual aspirant should persistently contemplate that he is the immortal *Atma*, the witness of the physical and subtle bodies, the ever pure and perfect.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It is free from all action. It does not slay, nor is it slain.

The Lord explains how Atma is immortal.

20. न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २०

Na jayate mriyate va kadachin
nayam bhutva bhavita va na bhuyah ।
ajo nityah sasvato 'yam purano
na hanyate hanyamane sarire ॥ 20

Meaning : अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), कदाचित् *kadachit* : at any time, न जायते *na jayate* : is not born, न म्रियतेवा *na mriyate va* : or not dies, न भूत्वा *na bhutva* : having not been, भूयः *bhuyah* : (any) more, भविता *bhavita* : will be, वा न *va na* : or not, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अजः *ajah* : unborn, नित्यः *nityah* : eternal, शाश्वतः *sasvatah* : unchanging, पुराणः *puranah* : the ancient, शरीरे *sarire* : in body, हन्यमाने *hanyamane* : being killed, नहन्यते *na hanyate* : is not killed.

Substance : *Atma* is not born, nor does it ever die; after having been it does not cease to be, unborn, eternal, changeless, and ancient, it is not killed when the body is destroyed.

Commentary : In the Katha Upanishad, there is a verse similar to this. This shows clearly that the Gita is the essence of the Upanishads.

Though the body is destroyed, yet the all-pervading *Atma* never dies. It shows that *Atma* remains only as a witness to the modifications of the body like birth, youth and death, and of the mind in the form of pain and pleasure. The disturbance of the storm clouds does not affect the sun or the sky through which they pass. Therefore man should not identify himself with the foul perishable body and the ever-functioning mind, but should hold on to his identity with the Self. Supreme joy and courage are realised by the wise who are one with *Atma*. The fear of death is atonce driven off by the knowledge that he is the immortal *Atma*.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma?*

Answer : It has no birth or death. It is eternal, firm and immovable. It is the ancient one. It exists when the body dies.

The Lord explains why Atma does not slay anything nor is slain.

21. वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यम् य एनमजमव्ययम् ।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ २१

Vedavinasinam nityam ya ena majamavyayam ।
katham sa purushah partha kam ghatayati hanti kam ॥ 21

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna !, यः *yah* : he who, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), अजम् *ajam* : birthless, अव्ययम् *avyayam* : eternal, अविनाशिनम् *avinasinam* : imperishable, नित्यम् *nityam* : real, वेद *veda* : knows, सपुरुषः *sa purushah* : that man, कथम् *katham* : how, कम् *kam* : whom, घातयति *ghatayati* : causes to be slain, कम् *kam* : whom ? हन्ति *hanti* : kills.

Substance : O Arjuna ! He who knows that *Atma* is birthless, deathless, real and imperishable, whom can he slay or cause to be slain ?

Commentary : The idea is emphasised that since *Atma* is eternal the man who knows Him, cannot slay any one, nor even cause to slay by any means.

The relation between Atma and the body is explained through a simile.

22. वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२

Vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya
navani grihnati naro 'parani ।
tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany
anyani samyati navani dehi ॥ 22

Meaning : नरः *narah* : man, जीर्णानि *jirnani* : worn out, वासांसि *vasamsi* : clothes, विहाय *vihaya* : having thrown away, अपराणि *aparani* : others, नवानि *navani* : new, यथा *yatha* : as, गृह्णाति *grihnati* : takes, तथा *tatha* : so, देही *dehi* : the embodied, जीर्णानि *jirnani* : decayed, शरीराणि *sarirani* : bodies, विहाय *vihaya* : having cast away, अन्यानि *anyani* : others, नवानि *navani* : new, (bodies), संयाति *samyati* : takes.

Substance : Just as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and puts on new ones so also the Self throws away its worn out bodies and takes other fresh bodies.

Commentary : The Lord adopts the method of explaining his ideas by means of vivid similies. Such comparisons help to make the idea clear to common man. We have here a familiar simili to explain a very high vedantic doctrine that the body is just like a garment worn by man and just as these garments are changed from time to time, even so the *Jiva* goes on changing the physical body birth after birth.

No one grieves when he casts off dirty and torn clothes and puts on other fresh garments. No one grieves when the autumn-withered leaves fall off from the branches. There is always the knowledge that fresh leaves come up with the arrival of spring. The whole of Nature presents such alternate pictures of bareness and beauty according to the changes of seasons. The Lord points out that death is no more than the rejection of the old and decayed body. The *Jiva* drops off the decayed body by death and adopts a fresh one. So there is absolutely no cause for grief. But of course, to destory the past *karma* by supreme *jnana*, and escape from the cycle of birth and death is the reward of the highest realisation.

Bodies :- The plural is used here to show that man has to pass through innumerable bodies, birth after birth, so long as he remains ignorant of his real nature.

Worn out :- We have to interpret this word as bodies whose *karmic* force is exhausted. We see that people die in child and youth, when the physical body is not supposed to be

old or worn out. In such cases the *karmic* force for that particular body is exhausted and it falls of accordingly.

The Vedantic doctrine is that the Self remains deathless, passing from one body to another, according to the force of *Karma* done with the body. These bodies (*upadhis*) continue to change but the real man, *Atma*, remains unaffected and changeless.

The five elemental forces cannot affect the Self, Atma.

23. नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३

Nainam chhindanti sastrani nainam dahati pavakah ।
na chainam kledayantyapo na soshayati marutah ॥ 23

Meaning: एनम् enam : this (*Atma*), शस्त्राणि *sastrani* : weapons, नछिन्दन्ति *na chhindanti* : cannot cut, पावकः *pavakah* : fire, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), नदहति *na dahati* : cannot burn, आपः च *apah cha* : and waters, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), नक्लेदयन्ति *na kledayanti* : cannot wet, मारुतः *marutah* : wind, नशोषयति *na soshayati* : cannot dry up.

Substance: Weapons cannot cut, fire cannot burn, water cannot wet, wind cannot dry up this *Atma*.

Commentary : The *Jiva* is the combination of three factors, body, mind and *Atma*. One is subtler than the other. The five material elements can affect the body only, because the body is composed of the five elements. They cannot affect the mind, the subtle body, because the subtle body is finer than the gross body. We see that gross matter can break up or destroy only a gross object. The sword can cut through a plant or human body, but it cannot cut the air or the ether. Finer and finer objects are not touched or affected by gross things, *Atma*, being the subtlest element nothing can touch or affect it in any way.

From the spiritual point of view, both the gross and subtle bodies are just false creations caused by ignorance (*avidya*), like the snake in the rope. So the superimposed mind

and body do not in any way interfere with or change *Atma*, which remains always the underlying substratum, like the rope on which the illusion of the snake is superimposed. The creations of the body and mind are like the water in a mirage. They appear to exist, but they have no existence in reality. What exists is *Atma* and *Atma* alone. Thus if the seeker contemplates the eternal and immortable Self, he acquires boundless courage and firmness.

The indestructability of Atma is again affirmed.

24. अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयं अक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थाणुः अचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४

Acchedho 'yamadahyo 'yamakledyo 'soshya eva cha ।
nityah sarvagatah sthanuh achalo 'yam sanatanah । 24

Meaning : अयम् *ayam* : this *Atma*, अच्छेद्यः *acchedyah* : cannot be cut, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*) अदाह्यः *adahyah* : cannot be burnt, अक्लेद्यः *akledyah* : cannot be wetted, अशोष्यएवच *asoshya evacha* and also cannot be dried, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), नित्यः *nityah* : eternal, सर्वगतः *sarvagatah* : all-pervading, स्थाणुः *sthanuh* : stable, अचलः *Achalah* : immovable, सनातनः *sanatanah* : ancient.

Substance : This *Atma* cannot be cut, cannot be burnt, cannot be wetted and also cannot be dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, firm, immovable and ancient.

Commentary : The five elements can only affect the body, because it is composed of the five elements. The Self is not a composition. If it is a composition, it should naturally decompose like the body and die. But the Self is deathless. It is One.

Eternal, all-pervading :- By these two epithets, *Atma* is declared to be beyond time and place. '*Nityah*' mean eternal (i.e.) having existence in the past, present and future. '*Sarvagatah*' means all-pervading i.e. pervading the whole universe entirely. Having entered time and space, the Self remains still above and beyond them. Every object in time is subject to time. There is no object which is not finally destroyed by time.

Worlds, stars, constellations, all things seen and known are swallowed up by time. And what is most wonderful is that the Self swallows up time and remains as Self. It is known as 'antakantaka'. It is eternal. It is eminence. It shines in all as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Such being the truth, how can any one commit sin against another. The noble ideal of universal love is the logical corollary from this truth that the Self alone exists every where, and in all beings. The seeker has thus to eliminate all sin and unchartitable thoughts and feelings against others by the contemplation of the supreme Self as the Lord of the Universe.

Because *Atma* is all-pervading and universal, there is no question of its moving from one place to another. And so, it is the immoveable ('*sthanu*'). It is also the ancient (*sanatanah*). So '*Sanatana dharma*' would really mean '*Atma-dharma*'. Those who have reached the state of *Atma* are liberated men, *Jivan-muktahs*' the living-free.

Question : *What is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It cannot be cut or burnt or wetted, or dried up. It is eternal, all-pervading, immoveable and ancient.

Knowing that Atma is eternal, one overcomes sorrow.

25. अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयं अविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५

Avyakto'yam achintyo 'yam avikaryo 'yamuchyate ।
tasmadevam viditvainam nanusochitu marhasi ॥ 25

Meaning : अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अव्यक्तः *avyaktah* : unknowable, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अचिन्त्यः *achintyah* : beyond thought, अयम् *ayam* : this (*Atma*), अविकार्यः *avikaryah* : change-less, उच्यते *uchyate* : is said, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, एनम् *enam* : this (*Atma*), एवम् *evam* : so, विदित्वा *viditva* : knowing, अनुशोचितुं *anusochitam* : to lament, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : is not right for you.

Substance : This self is unknowable by the senses, unthinkable by the mind, and is not subject to any kind of change. Knowing this, you should not grieve.

Commentary : An object made up of the gross elements can be seen by the eye. *Atma* is not such an object. So the eye cannot see it. Since *Atma* is beyond thought, the mind is powerless to know it, *Atma* is the eternal substratum that exists after the mind vanishes. When the mind is purified, it merges in the *Atma* and disappears, and when the mind disappears the whole of the objective world disappears, and only *Atma* remains in its own state. How then can the mind understand *Atma*? More over every object in the world goes through six processes of change–birth, growth etc. *Atma* is not born, is not subject to death, is changeless and eternal. It is the eternal subject, the seer, It is the eternal witness of the universe. It is the very essence of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. It is the final cause of the Universe. Ultimately the Universe dissolves into *Atma* and it alone remains without a second.

You should not grieve : The root cause of all sorrow is man's ignorance of his real nature, and his identification with the body and mind. Thus sorrow takes possession of the embodied being. Sorrow ('*Soka*') is the direct consequence of ignorance ('*Moha*'). But when, by the study of the '*Sastras*' and by the grace of God and '*Guru*', man comes to know that he is not the body but the Self (*Atma*), all sorrow leaves at once. This is the solution to the whole spiritual problem. Man should know and establish himself firmly in the Self. All spiritual practices are intended to pave the way for this blissful consummation. So long as there is the slightest separation between *Atma* and the individual being, there is scope for fear and sorrow to enter one way or the other. But when the union is complete, then is only bliss and blessedness all around. Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to know the Truth and transcend all sorrow and delusion. From this, we understand that the realisation of the Self is the only way to become free from the twin evils of ignorance and sorrow ('*Moha and Soka*'). Knowledge alone is the pure light to dispel the darkness of *samsara*.

Question : *What further is the nature of Atma ?*

Answer : It cannot be seen by the senses, cannot be understood by the mind, is not subject to any kind of change.

Question : *What is the way to transcend sorrow ?*

Answer : To know that he is *Atma* and not the body and mind, is the way to transcend sorrow.

Even from the limited human point of view, one should not grieve.

26. अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६

Atha chainam nityajatam nityam va manyase mritam ।
tatha'pi tvam mahabaho naivam sochitu marhasi ॥ 26

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : mighty-armed Arjuna!, अथच *atha cha* : even if, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), नित्यजातम् वा *nityajatam va* : constantly born or, नित्यं *nityam* : constantly, मृतम् *mritam* : dead, मन्यसे *manyase* : (thou) thinkest, तथापि *tathapi* : even then, एवम् *evam* : thus, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, त्वम् *tvam* : you, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : should not.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna! Even if you think that the Self is constantly born and constantly dies, you should not grieve in this way.

Commentary :- *Mighty-armed* : The Lord addresses Arjuna as 'mighty-armed'. Arjuna was endowed with great physical strength and energy. But it was of no avail to him in that perplexity-situation. His physical strength could not help him in his mental confusion and sorrow. So the Lord suggests that he should acquire spiritual light and knowledge, besides physical strength and energy.

The Lord argues out the point from the lower level of ordinary human-understanding, in order to comfort Arjuna and lift him up to the higher level of spiritual insight. Even if the Self of man is constantly born and constantly dies, there is no cause for grief; for, whatever dies takes a fresh birth again. The ordinary man whose insight does not go deep enough to comprehend the eternal *Atma*, sees that the body dies. When it dies, it should have again a birth. It is the process of endless repetition. So, why grieve when the bodies are destroyed? The Lord knows that mere theoretical affirmation of the immortality of *Atma* may not be immediately understood by his disciple. So he gives a practical reason which the comman man can easily understand.

But the practical arguments are mere assumptions of the limited intellect only. Even if it is taken that *Atma*, like the body, is subject to birth and death and rebirth, there is no need to grieve for the destruction of the body. It follows that it is utter madness to grieve for *Atma* which is real, deathless and eternal.

27. जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युः ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७

Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityuh dhruvam janma mritasya cha ।
tasmadapariharye 'rthe na tvam sochitumarhasi ॥ 27

Meaning : जातस्य *jatasya* : the born, हि *hi* : for, मृत्युः *mrityuh* : death, ध्रुवः *dhruvah* : certain, मृतस्य *mritasya* : of the dead, जन्म च *janma cha* : and birth, ध्रुवम् *dhruvam* : certain, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, अपरिहार्येऽर्थे *apariharyerthe* : in inevitable matter, त्वम् *tvam* : you, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : must not.

Substance : For, certain is death for the born, and certain is birth for the dead, and therefore you should not grieve about this inevitable course.

Commentary : The Lord continues the argument. For that which is born, there is death, and for that which dies there is birth. This is the unalterable law for the body and all material things. The Self (*Atma*) as declared above, is not the body and is not the composition of material elements, and so it has neither birth nor death. So long as man remains in a

state of ignorance and identifies with the body, he inevitably passes through the cycle of birth and death. The same man, when he realises his identity with the Self, the procession of birth and death stops for him. The Lord here speaks of the common man who has not understood the secret of his real nature. The purpose of the Lord is to rouse Arjuna from the slough of despondency into which he sank in that hour of test and trial. So He employs every argument both of spiritual Truth and common-understanding with equal force and conviction. But the ultimate spiritual law remains unchanged by the mundane considerations brought forward to drive home a particular aspect of the Truth.

28. अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८

Avyaktadeeni bhutani vyakta madhyani bharata ।
avyaktanidhananyeva tara ka paridevana ॥ 28

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : Arjuna !, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, अव्यक्तादीनि *avyaktadeeni* : (are of) unknown origin, व्यक्तमध्यानि *vyaktamadhyani* : known middle, अव्यक्तनिधनानि *avyaktanidhanani* : of unknown end, एव *eva* : only, तत्र *tatra* : in that case, परिदेवना *paridevana* : lamentation, का *ka* : why.

Substance : O Arjuna ! All these beings are of unknown origin, known middle, and of unknown end. Why then lament for it ?

Commentary : This is a true estimate of all beings in the universe. Their state before their birth is not known. They appear to exist for a period after they are born. And again, they disappear after death. One does not see them before birth and after death. Why men feel so much when they pass away ?

People have no connection with the body before it is born. And they cease all contact with the body after death Only for a brief interval in the middle period, there is a kind of link. What has not existed in the beginning and what does not exist after the end, though it appears in between the two points, cannot be real. It is non-existence.

The whole universe is thus an illusion. This is the drum-beat of Vedanta.

The dream world did not exist before the dream. It does not exist after one wakes up from the dream. It exists only while the dream lasts. He knows it to be a tremendous illusion after he wakes up. In the same way, the whole universe and all the pleasures and pains that one experiences, are all illusions for the man who has awakened from the dream. They are like the water in the mirage, which to the eye appears clear and beautiful, and which when one investigates disappears at once. Why then all this fear and sorrow, weeping and wailing when the whole thing is an illusion ?

In this manner, the Lord argues out the issue, and the succession of thoughts so far may be summarised thus.

(1) *Atma* is eternal. All living beings, the so called relations and friends are different manifestations of the same indestructible *Atma*, and so Arjuna should not grieve for them.

(2) *Atma* is unchanging; one wears and throws away different bodies, as old clothes are discarded and new garments are worn.

(3) Even if it is accepted for the sake of argument, that *Atma* itself is born and dies again and again, Arjuna should not grieve for the dead, because they should take birth again.

(4) These bodies did not exist before birth, and so do not exist after death. They appear in between for a brief interval of time only. Therefore they are unreal, and illusory. Why then grieve for them ?

The Lord now declares that the realisation of Atma is a rare achievement for human beings.

29. आश्चर्यवत्पश्यति कश्चिदेनं आश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९

Ascharyavatpasyati kaschidenam
ascharyavadvadati tathaiva chanyah ।

ascharyavacchainam anyah srunoti
srutva'pyenam veda na chaiva kaschit । 29

Meaning : कश्चित् *kaschit* : some one, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), आश्चर्यवत् *ascharyavat* : as a surprise, पश्यति *pasyati* : sees, तथैव *tathaiva* : and also, अन्यः च *anyah cha* : and another, आश्चर्यवत् *ascharyavat* : as a wonder, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), वदति *vadati* : speaks, अन्यः च *anyah cha* : and another, एनम् *enam* : this (Self). आश्चर्यवत् *ascharyavat* : as a wonder, श्रुणोति *srunoti* : hears, श्रुत्वापि *srutvapi* : though hearing, एनम् *enam* : this (Self), कश्चित् च *kaschit cha* : and any one, वेद न एव *Veda na eva* : also knows not.

Substance : One sees this (Self) as a wonder, another speakes of this (Self) as a wonder, another hears of this (Self) as a wonder, yet, having heard, none understands this (Self) at all.

Commentary : The spiritual science does not end with mere theory. It is a practical experience. Only by experience does a man know the Self and understand what it is and how it functions in the practical world. But, for such direct experience, much good should have accumulated in the past, the mind should have been purified and freed from all bad tendencies. Therefore only the man who has long practised the control of the senses, ('*Sama*' and '*Dama*'), and who has gone through many forms of spiritual discipline, is qualified to enter the domain of the Self. Others, though they enquire after the truth, are far away from understanding and realising it. When the mirror is clear, the image is reflected clearly in it. A pure cloth can easily be dyed with any colour. The seed sown in a watered ground soon sprouts into a plant. Even so, when the mind is pure, the Self is reflected in it clearly. But such men of pure mind are rare. So spiritual experience is a rare achievement for any human being. The same idea is expressed in the Katha Upanishad.

The man of heroic courage and determination desiring immortality, turns the out-going senses and mind inwards, and sees the supreme Self.

The Self is not an object to be seen or spoken or heard of. It is beyond the senses and mind. It is the subtlest of the subtle. It is hidden in the inmost recesses of the heart. By selfless action, devotion, dispassion, mediation and such other methods, the heart should first be purified, and the enquiry for the Self should be continued for a long time before the Self is directly perceived. The Lord does not say that no one knows Him. He means only that such men are rare.

Since the Self is entirely different from any object seen or known, it is looked upon as a wonder.

The verse may also mean that the speaker, the hearer, and the knower of the Supreme Being are all men of wonder.

The Lord concludes this part of the argument by restating the final position that Atma is indestructible, and so there is no reason to grieve.

30. देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात्सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३०

Dehi nityamavadhyo'yam dehe sarvasya bharata ।
tasmat sarvani bhutani na tvam sochitumarhasi ॥ 30

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna!, सर्वस्य *sarvasya* : of all beings, देहे *dehi* : in the body, अयम् देही *ayam dehi* : this in-dwelling Self, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, अवध्यः *avadhyah* : not slain, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, सर्वाणि *sarvani* : (for) all, भूतानि *bhutani* : creation, त्वम् *tvam* : you, शोचितुम् *sochitum* : to grieve, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : should not.

Substance : O Arjuna! The Self existing in the body of all beings is never slain. So it is not right for you to grieve for any creature.

Commentary : Though the body is slain, the indwelling *Atma* is not slain. This is true in the case of all creatures. It follows that *Atma* dwells in the body, as a witness, unaffected by the modifications of the body.

Always :- The immortality of *Atma* applies to all time, past, present and future.

The body may belong to any man, beast, or plant or any thing in the universe. The indwelling *Atma* is the same everywhere. When the body suffers and dies, the ignorant man thinks that he is suffering and dying, and so weeps and wails for the destruction of the body. The Lord here states categorically that the real man is no other than *Atma*, and so whatever might happen to the body, he is not at all affected by it, even as the sky is not affected by the passage of clouds over it. So where is the cause for sorrow? Sorrow comes only by the false identification of the Self with the body. To think that you are the body is the very source, the very cause of all sorrow and suffering. It is immediately removed when you come to know that you are *Atma*. So the seeker should constantly contemplate and realise his oneness with the immortal and ever-blessed Self.

Bharata : Arjuna is addressed as '*Bharata*' (i. e.) 'Lover of Light'. It is in the light of the Self that all things shine, all things are seen and known. Whatever light is in the world, all that belongs to *Atma*, and not to insentient matter. He who loves this light is '*Bharata*'.

Question : *Explain the nature of the body and the Atma?*

Answer : The body dies. *Atma* is imperishable and eternal.

Question : *What is the way to remove sorrow?*

Answer : Not to identify oneself with the body, but realise his oneness with the *Atma*, is the way to remove all sorrow for ever.

Thus the Lord enunciated the eternal nature of Atma, and from this verse onwards, he stresses the duty of Arjuna to fight even according to 'Kshatriya Dharma'.

31. स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१

Svadharman api cha'vekshya
na vikampitu marhasi ।
Dharmyaddhi yuddhacchreyo 'nyat
kshatriyasya na vidyate ॥ 31

Meaning : च *cha* : moreover, स्वधर्मम् *svadharmam* : one's own duty, अवेक्ष्य अपि *avekshya api* : considering, विकम्पितुम् *vikampitum* : waver, नार्हसि *na arhasi* : (you) should not, क्षत्रियस्य *Kshatriyasya* : for a Kshatriya, धर्म्यात् *dharmat* : than righteous, युद्धात् *yuddhat* : war, अन्यत् *anyat* : other, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, न विद्यते हि *na vidyate hi* : is not.

Substance : And moreover, considering your own duty, you should not waver, for, there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war.

Commentary : We understand from this verse how much the Lord loves the performance of one's own *Dharma*. One should not waver in discharging his duty. This is the Lord's command. So long as the body lasts, every being has to do some work or other. This is the inescapable law of our nature. Action being inevitable in the material world, it is necessary for man to do some selfless work, according to his duty, which leads to great good on the physical plane and elsewhere. More so, selfless work purifies the mind and leads ultimately to liberation. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to fight a righteous war. The Lord emphasizes the righteousness of the undertaking. Otherwise, it would be an unrighteous war resulting only in hatred, sorrow, and death, and no merit comes to any one.

32. यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२

Yadricchaya cho'papannam svargadvaram apavritam ।
sukhinah kshatriyah partha labhante yuddhamidrisam ॥ 32

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna!, यदृच्छया *yadricchaya* : and of itself, उपपन्नम् *upapannam* : come, अपावृतम् *apavritam* : opened, स्वर्गद्वारम्च *svargadvaram cha* : and the gates of Heaven, ईदृशम् *idrisam* : such, युद्धम् *yuddham* : war, क्षत्रियाः *Kshatriyah* : Kshatriyas, लभन्ते *labhante* : get, सुखिनः *sukhinah* : happy.

The Lord propounds the law of work in the world, free from sin

38. सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ॥
तततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८

Sukha duhkhe same kritva labhalabhau jayajayau ।
tato yuddhaya yujyasva nai'vam papam avapsyasi ॥ 38

Meaning : सुखदुःखे *sukhadukhae* : in pleasure and pain, लभालाभौ *labhalabhau* : gain and loss, जयाजयौ *jayajayau* : victory and defeat, समेकृत्वा *same kritva* : having made equal, ततः *tatah* : then, युद्धाय *yuddhaya* : for battle, युज्यस्व *yujyaswa* : engage thou, एवम् *evam* : thus, पापम् *papam* : sin, न अवाप्स्यसि *na avapsyasi* : (you) shall not incur.

Substance : Having an equal mind in pain and pleasure, gain and loss, victory and defeat, engage in battle and thereby you will not incur sin.

Commentary : In this verse, the Lord teaches the secret of *Karma Yoga*. Though engaged in various types of activity, a man can live without any taint of sin. That secret lies in the balance of mind, equanimity and detachment. So should man work without losing his equanimity in the vicissitudes of natural change. Success unbalances the mind by a wave of elation, and defeat by a wave of depression.

This is what the common man experiences in the course of his life's activity. The Gita propounds equanimity, as the only cure for these mental waves carrying man from one extreme to another. And these mental disturbances are caused by attachment to the enjoyments of life. The seeker should know that he has nothing to gain or lose by victory or defeat in his endeavours. Thus he would be free from the disturbing emotions of pride, egotism and elation in success, self-pity in sorrow and despair in failure. When the mind is kept in a state of equanimity, *Atma* is reflected clearly. How can such a man incur sin? Some people think that the *yoga* of work is a lower path, and that work binds man to the wheel of birth and death.

The Lord denies it. It is not work that binds, but the attachment to the fruits of work that binds. If a man attaches himself to the fruits of work, then he is bound and he has to take a number of births to enjoy or suffer the effect of his works. On the other hand, if the aspirant knows that he has nothing to seek for in the universe, that he is *Atma*, then he is indifferent to the results of his work. He is equal-minded. This is the secret of *Karma Yoga*.

Then engage in battle : From this we understand that before plunging into action, one should know and practice the secret of work. The Lord's command is 'then fight' (i.e.) after attaining equanimity of mind. Otherwise action immediately binds him to the wheel of birth and death. The ups and downs of worldly life and its reactions will throw the man off the gear into a tormented state of pain and suffering. Perfect knowledge should illumine work. Then work becomes worship. Therefore the Lord first teaches Arjuna in the second discourse (*Sankhya Yoga)* the highest doctrine of *Vedanta* (i. e.), the indivisibility of the personal man with *Paramatma*, the immortality of the Self, and then, comes down to teach the method of work.

Question : *How should man work ?*

Answer : By being firmly established in equanimity.

Question : *What is the way of work without being tranished with sin ?*

Answer : Detachment.

Having spoken of Sankhya Yoga the Lord now explains the rudiment of Karma Yoga.

39. एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगे त्विमां शृणु ।
बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९

Esha te 'bhihita samkhye
buddhiryoge tvimam srinu ।
buddhya yukto yaya partha 39
ka mabandham prahasyasi ॥

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna!, सांख्ये *sankhye* : in Sankhya Yoga, एषा *esha* : this, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : knowledge, ते *te* : to you, अभिहिता *abhihita* : is declared, यया बुद्ध्या *yaya buddhya* : with what knowledge, युक्तः *yuktah* : associated, कर्मबन्धम् *karma-bandham* : bondage of karma, प्रहास्यसि *prahasyasi* : shall cast off, तम् (*tam* : that Yoga), योगे *yoge* : in the Karma Yoga, तु *tu* : in deed, इमम् *imam* : this knowledge to be taught, शृणु *srinu* : hear.

Substance : O Arjuna! So far the knowledge of *Sankhya Yoga* about *Atma* is declared. Now hear the knowledge of *Karma Yoga*, knowing which you shall cast off the bondage of work.

Commentary : To work and yet to be free from the effects of work requires subtle understanding of the secret of work. Such understanding is termed *buddhi*. Holding this knowledge man is not caught in the knowledge of *Karma*. Such work, instead of binding man, becomes a means to his liberation. The Lord now explains the secret of *Karma Yoga* for the benefit of all mankind. Knowing the secret of *Karma Yoga* every individual can transcend the reactions of his own *Karma*, and reach the ultimate goal of liberation.

The Lord describes the power of Karma Yoga.

40. नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४०

Neha'bhikramanaso 'sti pratyavayo na vidyate ।
svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat ॥ 40

Meaning : इह *iha* : in Karma Yoga (which leads to *Moksha*), अभिक्रमनाशः *abhikarmanasah* : loss of effort, नास्ति *na asti* : is not, प्रत्यवायः *pratyavayah* : adverse effects, नविद्यते *na vidyate* : is not, अस्य धर्मस्या *asya dharmasya* : of this principle (of Karma Yoga), स्वल्पमपि *svalpamapi* : even a little, महतः *mahatah* : from great, भयात् *bhayat* : fear, त्रायते *trayate* : protects.

Substance : In this *Karma Yoga*, there is no loss of effort. Even if it is stopped in the middle, no taint or adverse effect is produced. Even a little practice of this *Yoga* protects man from great fear.

Commentary : This *Karma Yoga*, performed with discrimination, is a powerful spiritual force. It never goes to waste. When once it is started, good results flow from whatever is done in this *Yoga*. There is no harm or adverse effect even if it is stopped in the middle. For instance, when we paint a seed in the soil, we should water the soil constantly. Otherwise the seed is destroyed. Such is not the case with this *Yoga*. Whatever is done produces its own good results in proper measure and at the proper time. Nothing is lost and no effort is wasted.

Protects from great fear :– Even a little of this *Sadhana* protects man from great fear. And what is the great fear of man in this world? Death. The cycle of birth and death constitutes *Samsara*. By the practice of this *Yoga*, man transcends this awful fear.

A small spark of fire is capable of spreading and burning up a whole forest; A small ship is capable of taking us over the big ocean. Even so, even a little practice of the *Karma Yoga* protects man from the great ills of life. The seeker need not feel discouraged at all. Though he cannot attain to the state of perfection all atonce, he should continue this practice, little by little, without intermission. Even it is a piece of worship, or a small *mantra* – have faith in it and go on doing it as best as you can. This will enable you to cross the ocean of *samsara*. A bit of medicine, taken with proper diet, helps a man to overcome a fearful disease.

This declaration is the most encouraging assurance of the Lord to all mankind. Generally the seekers are discouraged by thinking of the obstacles on the path of spiritual life "How can I swim across this mighty inscrutable ocean of *samsara*? How can I transcend this limitless darkness of ignorance? Alas! I am not a *Rishi*. I cannot perform painful *Tapas*. I have no steadiness of mind. How can I be saved?" Such is the usual train of thought for the majority of the seekers. Such discouraging

Kamatmanah svargaparah janma karma phala pradam ।
kriya visesha bahulam bhogaisvarya gatim prati ॥ 43
Bhogaisvarya prasaktanam taya 'pahritachetasam ।
vyavasayatmika buddhih samadhau na vidhiyate ॥ 44

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha* : O Arjuna !, वेदवादरताः *vedavadaratah* : those who desire to enjoy the fruits of Vedic rituals, नान्यदस्तीतिवादिनः *nanyadastiti vadinah* : who do not believe in any thing higher than Heaven and its pleasures, कामात्मानः *kamatmanah* : mind filled with desiers, स्वर्गपराः *svargaparah* : desirous of enjoyments in heaven, अविपश्चितः *avipaschitah* : ignorant men, जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् *janmakarmaphalapradam* : leading to births as the result of their works, भोगैश्वर्यगतिंप्रति *bhogaisvaryagatimprati* : to obtain enjoyment and prosperity, क्रियाविशेषबहुलां *kriyaviseshabahulam* : having innumerable rights and rituals, पुष्पिताम् *pushpitam* : appearing attractive like flowers but bearing no fruit, याम् इमाम् *yam imam* : who this, वाचम् *vacham* : word, प्रवदन्ति *pravadanti* : utter, तया *taya* : by that, अपहृतचेतसाम् *apahritachetasam* : mind drawn away, भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानाम् *bhogaisvarya prasaktanam* : people desirous of enjoyment and prosperity, व्यवसायात्मिकाबुद्धिः *vyavasayatmika buddhih* : determinate reason, समाधौ *samadhau* : in the divine communion, न विधीयते *na vidhiyate* : is not fixed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The unwise utter flowery speech, taking pleasure in the laudatory words of the Vedas, and say that there is nothing else but pleasures and enjoyments either here or in Heaven.

They are full of desire, with heaven as their highest goal, leading to new births as the effect of their own *Karma*, and they engage themselves in a multiplicity of specific works for the purpose of acquiring enjoyments and prosperity.

The mind of such men who are drawn away by attachment to pleasure and wealth, cannot be concentrated to remain fixed in the ecstasy of divine contemplation.

Commentary : *Flowery speech* :— Some flowers appear attractive to the eye, but they do not bear fruit, and as such, they are finally useless. The works prepared with a desire do not bear the fruit of *Moksha*, which should be the aim of all spiritual seekers.

Utter :- This word, is used to show that these men loudly proclaim that enjoyment in heaven is the highest aim of man. They are men of little knowledge. Naturally, empty vessels make much noise.

Ignorant men :- These are unwise men. Those who perform rites and rituals for the sake of enjoying the pleasures of heaven are spoken of as unwise men. So, however learned and versed in the 'Vedas' a person may be, he is still an unwise man because he is not able to know the truth and fix his mind on the Supreme Reality. The verse is intended to open the eyes of such persons who have learnt much but whose mind dwells on the lower levels of desires, pleasures and enjoyments. The Lord condemns at every step sense-pleasures either here or in heaven.

Those who take pleasure in the laudatory words of the Vedas :- In the *Vedas* the first part is *Karma kanda* which deals with rites and rituals for the fulfilment of earthly or heavenly pleasures. "If you perform this ceremony or this sacrifice, you will get this reward". This part of the Vedas is all-absorbing to wordly men. They cannot think of any thing higher. So they declare that *Karma kanda* alone is the highest among the Vedas. There are three parts in the Vedas — (1) *Karma kanda* (2) *Upasana kanda*, (3) *Jnana kanda*. The unwise cling to the first part, act neglecting the other two which are gradually of higher and higher value. The teacher of the Gita declares that this is a wrong attitude, because it is not conducive to spiritual enlightenment.

Minds filled with desires :- Those whose minds are filled with desires are *kamatmanah*. They are slaves to a hundred desires, for wife and children, for name and fame, for power and position. Whether these are fulfilled or unfulfilled, their minds are restless. How can divinity find a place in the hearts

of such people. Desire (*Kama*) leads to Anger (*Krodha*) when frustrated. Only when the heart is purified of all these foul and filthy stuff, will God reveal himself in the sanctuary of the human heart.

Desirous of enjoyments in Heaven : Those who consider heaven (*svarga*) as their highest goal are *svargaparah*. The The spiritual seeker sets no value on *svarga* and all that it offers by way of pleasures and enjoyments. On the other hand, those who discard them as worthless stuff are alone qualified to attain freedom and perfection. Of course, the luxuries of Heaven may be more beautiful and captivating than what we find here. But they are subject to the same laws as we find here. They are subject to death and dissolution. They end in time, Heavenly pleasures are worthless, from the point of view of spiritual realisation also· It is foolish to think that heaven is the highest goal of mankind. The highest goal for man is to know and realise the Eternal Truth. Every thing that comes short of it is of no consequence to the spiritual aspirant. Heaven is not the goal, for, when the (*Punya*) good done by man is exhausted, down he falls from heaven to the earth.

So there is nothing that should draw mankind towards the pleasures of Heaven. They are also intended to satisfy the animal instincts of man, like food and sex. Of what use are they for the aspirants? An understanding of earthly pleasures will help us to know what heavenly enjoyments would he like, and how shortlived and wretched they are to satisfy man. It is the height of folly to spend a whole life-time merely for the sake of attaining Heaven by performing elaborate sacrifices, at great cost and labour· There the main aim of spiritual realisation was forgotten. Therefore the Lord directly attacks heaven-seeking ritual-ridden religious men, and teaches them that they are slaves to their own desires, and with such distracted minds, they can never hope to remain fixed in the ecstatic contemplation of the Self which alone confers immortality and eternal bliss.

Leading to births as the result of their works :- The present birth is the result of past work (*karma*) and the work one

does now leads on to the next birth. So, endless the cycle goes on. This is *samsara*. The aspirant hopes to reach a state when the cycle stops forever and he attains to a condition of supreme blessedness from which there is no fall. To attain this state, the Lord prescribes the law of *nishkama karma* as the rule of conduct in this world·

Having innumerable rituals to obtain enjoyment :- The *Karma kanda* in the 'Vedas' mentions various rites and rituals, cermonies and sacrifies, which yield different enjoyments here and in Heaven Men who are bound by desires are simply drowned in the ocean of *karma kanda*. They cannot come out of it. One desire leads to another, and at no time will these desires end, for they are almost infinite. This is what we find in man's limited experience or wordly life. So the spiritual aspirant should cut at the root of desires and burn it up into cinders. He has nothing to gain from *karma kanda*. The aim is to root out desire from the heart, and to become pure, so that the sanctified heart is at once filled with the blessedness of the Lord. Then alone is man fully satisfied. There is nothing more for him to seek for Eternal Contentment; Eternal renunciation comes to such a man.

Drawn away by that : Almost the whole of mankind with the exception of rare personalities, are absorbed in the task of getting some reward or enjoyment from their wordly activities. The spiritual seeker should keep away from such men. He should associate himsef with men of renunciation, purity and knowledge.

Cannot be concentrated in Divine Contemplation :- Such men whose minds are disturbed by desire cannot get one-pointed concentration on the Eternal. Desires crop up and draw the mind off its balance. Pleasures and pains upset the mind constantly, like a lake when a storm blows over it. It is agitated, waves rise and fall and the whole lake to its very bottom is in a state of commotion. Such will be the mind of a man who is obsessed with thoughts of worldly enjoyment. He can never hope to get the necessary serenity and concentration to fix the mind on that which is the ever-blessed Reality. So 'give up desires' is the Lord's command.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to give up desires and think of the Supreme Reality.

45. त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम·आत्मवान् ॥ ४५

Traigunya vishaya veda nistraigunyo bhava'rjuna।
nirdvandvo nitya satvastho niryogakshema atmavan ॥ 45

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna!, वेदाः *Vedah* : the Vedas (*Karma kanda*), त्रैगुण्यविषयाः *traigunyavishayah* : deal with things pertaining to the three *gunas*, त्वम् *tvam* : you, निस्त्रैगुण्यः *nistraigunyah* : one who has given up three *gunas* or the three desires arising from them, निर्द्वन्द्वः *nirdvandah* : having no pains of opposites like pleasure and pain, नित्यसत्त्वस्थः *nityasatvasthah* : taking refuge in the pure *satvic* state, निर्योगक्षेमः *niryogakshemah* : having nothing to gain or retain in the world, आत्मवान् *atmanam* : established in *Atma*, भव *bhava* : become.

Substance : The first part of the *Vedas* (*Karma kanda*) deal with material things pertaining to the three *gunas*. One should transcend the three *gunas*, become free from the operation of the pains of opposites, take refuge in the pure *satvic* state, and firmly establish himself in *Atma*.

Commentary : *Deal with things pertaining the three Gunas* : This should be understood from the context to refer only to the *Karma kanda* of the Vedas. The later parts in Upanishads deal with the Supreme Reality, beyond all conditions and states of mind, though here and there reference is made to the rites and rituals of *Karma kanda*. The material world comprehended by the senses is conditioned by the three *gunas* or attributes of the mind. This world so comprehended is very limited, is transitary and perishable. *Atma*, which is the seer of all objective phenomena is not conditioned by the *gunas*. It is beyond them. It is eternally perfect. The bondage of life is only for those who are subject to the influence of the three *gunas*. Birth and death, sorrow and suffering, pleasures and

enjoyments, all these do not affect the wise man who has rooted himself in *Atma*. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to transcend them and hold to the Supreme Self.

Taking refuge in the pure 'Satvic' state : The *satva guna* mentioned here is not *misra satwa* which is mixed with the other two attributes, *rajas* and *tamas*. To transcend the three *gunas*, one should overcome *satya guna* also. In the early stages of the *sadhana*, the *satvic* state is coloured by the inherent *rajasic* and *tamasic* qualities. As these later two are slowly eliminated, pure *satva* (*sudha satva*) alone remains, when the *sadhaka* experiences the bliss of *Atma*. But in the final state of realisation, even this is transcended, and *Atma* alone, unconditioned and attributeless, remains in its own purity and perfection. The mind which has acquired the power to contemplate the Infinite *Atma* is called *Satva*. So says Sage Vasishta Since it is enjoined, *nityasatvasthah*, it is imperative that the seeker should hold on to that state always.

Having nothing to gain or retain in the world :– Yoga means the requisition of new things. *Kshema* means the preservation of the things required. The whole world is engaged in these two things, acquisition and preservation. Wealth, name, position, power, health, children, etc., these are the things which man is constantly trying to acquire, and preserving them after they are acquired. The Lord's injunction here is to give up both these things. For the man who firmly believes that *Atma* alone is the Reality, there is no such thing to possess or preserve, because *Atma* is everything and everything is *Atma*. He has nothing to gain or loose. Most of the worldly people desire to acquire wealth, possession, beauty and so on. But who is there who desires to rest in *Atma*? To rest in *Atma* is the greatest achievement, and when this is achieved, supreme content descends on the man, and there is no restlessness. So the way to transcend the *gunas* is to hold on to the *Atmic* state, with perseverence and determination.

Question : *What is the Lord's command?*

Answer : (1) To transcend the three *gunas*, (2) to be free from the pairs of opposites, (3) to give up thoughts of gain

and loss, (4) to remain in the state of *satva* (5) to be established in the Self.

46. यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ ४६

Yavanartha udapane sarvatah samplutodake ।
tavan sarveshu vedeshu brahmanasya vijanatah ॥ 46

Meaning : उदपाने *udapane* : in the reservoir, यावान् *yavan* : what, अर्थः *arthah* : use, सर्वतस्संप्लुतोदके *sarvatah samplutodake* : in the all-filling flood, तावान् *tavan* : that (use), सर्वेषु *sarveshu* : in all, वेदेषु *vedeshu* : Vedas, विजानतः *vijanatah* : to the known, ब्राह्मणस्य *brahmanasya* : of Brahman.

Substance : To an enlightened person who has known the Self all the vedas are of as much use as is a reservoir of water in a place where there is a flood.

Commentary : A small well is useful for purposes of drinking and washing. The same use is implicit in the all-filling flood of water. In the same way, all the rewards and enjoyments mentioned in the *Karma Kanda* of the *Vedas* are comprehended in the bliss of Brahman. Therefore the knower of Brahman does not care for the desire of fulfilling works mentioned in the *Karma Kanda* According to the law 'fifty is implicit in hundred' (*Sate pamchasat)* and according to the truth that in the foot of the elephant the feet of all other animals are comprehended, all the various pleasures and enjoyments are comprehended in the bliss and blessedness of *Atma*. Therefore the wise man does not hanker after rites and rituals in the hope of enjoyments here or in heaven. It is stated here *vijanatah*, and so superficial knowledge is not enough, but deep experience of *Atma* is necessary for perfect realisation.

Ramanuja and others also have given a different interpretation to this verse. For the thirsty man all the water in the well or flood is not necessary. A few glasses will do. For the sick man all the medicines in the world are not necessary. One

or two suitable medicines are enough. For the hungry man, all the food in the world is not necessary. A few handfuls are enough. In the same way, for the wise man, a few practices mentioned in the Vedas leading to Self-knowledge are quite sufficient. By following them he attains realisation of the Supreme. All the others are not needed for him. In the Vedas, inumerable *Mantras*, modes of worship, and works are revealed. The seeker may choose what suits him best to destory the desease of ignorance and reach the goal of liberation. Here the Lord assures the devotee not at all to be discouraged by thinking that he does not know all the injunctions and practices mentioned in the Vedas.

The Lord propounds the doctrine of Karma Yoga.

47. कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७

Karmanyeva'dhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana ।
ma karmaphalaheturbhurmate sango'stvakarmani ॥ 47

Meaning : ते *te* : to you, कर्मण्येव *karmanyeva* : in work only, अधिकारः *adhikarah* : right, कदाचन *kadachana* : at any time, फलेषु *phaleshu* : in the fruits of work, मा *ma* : not, कर्मफलहेतुः *karmaphalahetuh* : the cause and motive for the fruits of work, माभूः *ma bhuh* : do not become, अकर्मणि *akarmani* : in inaction, ते *te* : to you, सङ्गः *sangah* : attachment, अस्तु (*astu* : is), मा *ma* (*astu*) : shall not be.

Substance : (O Arjuna!) You have right to work only, and not to the fruits of work. Let not the fruit of action be your motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction.

Commentary : The doctrine of *Karma Yoga* is declared in this verse. Man has a right to work, and not to the furits of his work. It means that work should be done in a spirit of surrendering the fruits to the Lord. At all times, and under all circumstances, man should keep the mind free from the desire for the fruits of work Otherwise, the mind cannot be brought to a condition of peace and restfulness, and one-pointed concentra-

tion becomes impossible. As man thinks of the results of work, anxieties and fears rush into the mind. Spectres of failure haunt the mind. Difficulties and dangers born of imagination, bar the way to work. The emotions are disturbed by the shame of failure and the frustration of defeat. Mental energy is thus wasted in painful passions, and man's personality is wrecked on the rocks of anger and hatred. Life becomes miserable. This is the practical experience of every individual in the world. Thus, we see that work prompted by desire is a disturbing and not a purifying factor in spiritual *sadhana*. Unless the mind is purified, man cannot get a glimpse of the Self. Therefore *nishkama karma* is absolutely essential for spiritual reali-sation.

Let not thine attachment be to inaction :- This should be clearly understood. The Lord's command is that attachment to the fruits of work should be given up, and not the works. To give up work is a sign of laziness and inaction. It is *tamas*. It is the negation of spiritual progress. In sleep one does not do anything at all. But sleep is not self-realisation. The walls and polls do not work. They are not philosophers for that reason. Therefore inaction born of *tamas* should be counter-acted in very possible way. The Lord's command is an axe-stroke on all forms of idleness and weakness, which apparently looks like the peace of *Jnana*. Some people, out of ignorance, spend their time in empty nothingness, imagning that state to be *Brahmanishta*. Such people fail both in material and spiri-tual life. It is imperative for them to recognise *tamasic* in-action as the first enemy in spiritual life. They should wake up from *tamas* and start doing something good. No one can live without work. Man must do some kind of work or other. Let that work which you do, be done without attachment is the Lord's command. That will yield the highest fruit of liberation. *Nishkama karma* is one of the main tenets of the Gita. This is the message which roused Arjuna to the level of heroic action from his present state of despair and delusion.

Question : *What is the man qualified to do ?*

Answer : Man has a right to work, but not to **seek for the** fruits of work.

Question : *What should be given up ?*

Answer : The fruits of work, and the negation of work, both should be given up.

Question : *What then is the law ?*

Answer : To work without desire for the fruits of work is the law.

48. योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गम् त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८

Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhanamjaya ।
sidhyasidhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate ॥ 48

Meaning : धनंजय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna !, योगस्थः *yoga-stah* : established in yoga, सङ्गम् *sangam* : attachment of I and mine, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : renouncing, सिध्यसिध्योः *sidhyasidhyoh* : in success and failure, समो भूत्वा *samo bhutva* : having become equal-minded, कर्माणि *karmani* : works, कुरु *kuru* : do, समत्वम् *samatvam* : (such) equanimity, योगः *yogah* : yoga, उच्यते *uchyate* : is called.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Steadfast in *Yoga*, giving up all attachment, unmindful of success or failure, do your work. Such equanimity of mind is called *Yoga*.

Commentary : The Lord's command is that man should work, having established himself firmly in *Yoga*. What is *Yoga*? Equanimity of mind in success and failure is *Yoga*. The defini-tion of *Yoga* should be carefully noted. How can one acquire such perfect mental equilibrium ? Such a state can be had only when one transcends the mind and enter the Atmic state. That is the yogic position. The merging of the mind in *Atma* is *Yoga*. As this state alone can bring about perfect equanimity, the word *Yoga* is here applied to *samatvam* (i. e.) equal-mind-dness under all circumstances. Free from any kind of desire, realising one's unity with *Atma*, man should work.

One should cultivate the habit of remaining steadfast in *Atma*, before plunging into work, Godliness and spirituality

should permeate the mind. One should feel his identity with the universel Being. Otherwise the work he does will bind him to the world. The success and failures, losses and failures of his wordly activities disturb the mind by throwing it up in waves of momentary elation and depression and of pride and despondency. So one should deeply think of the Self and discriminate the real from the unreal. Then only can a man work with real detachment and with a steady mind. That is why the Lord first teaches the *yoga* of self-realisation and next speaks of *Karma Yoga*.

Question : *What is yoga ?*

Answer : Equanimity of mind is *yoga*.

Question : *What is the method of work ?*

Answer : Steadfast in *yoga*, free from attachment, and equal-minded in success and failure, man should work.

49. दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ ४९

Durena hyavaram karma buddhiyogaddhanamjaya ।
buddhau saranam anviccha kripanah phalahetavah ॥ *49*

Meaning : धनंजय *dhanamjyaya* : O Arjuna !, बुद्धियोगात् : *buddhiyogat* : to work done with equal-minded intellect, कर्म *karma* : work with attachement, दूरेण *durena* : very much, अवरम् हि *avaram hi* : inferior indeed, बुद्धौ *buddhau* : in eqanimity born of intellect, शरणम् *saranam* : refuge, अन्विच्छ *anvicha* : seek, फलहेतवः *phalahetavah* : those who desire the fruits of work, कृपणाः *kripanah* : (are) wrecked men.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Work with attachment is far inferior to *nishkama karma*. Therefore seek refuge in desireless action with equanimity of mind. Those who work for fruits and reward are wrecked.

Commentary : We find that Arjuna is addressed as *Dhanamjaya* in this and the previous verse. The Lord exhorts him not to content with worldly wealth and dominion which are perishable stuff, but seek and strive for spiritual treasure which is eternal.

In the Gita, the term *buddhi yoga* is many times used as an equivalent to *jnana yoga*. Here the term is used in the sense of the discriminative intellect which makes *nishkama karma* possible. *Buddhi* is *nischyatmaka* (i. e.) the determining faculty of the pure intellect by which *Atma* is realised, and freedom from *samsara* is attained. The mind is polluted by various tendencies (*vasanas*) which bind man to the pleasures of the objective world, and carry him on from birth to birth. The discriminative intellect has the power to order the mind and determine what is right from the spiritual point of view. Therefore take refuge in *buddhi* is the Lord's advice. When man brings into direct operation this faculty of the intellect, the dust and heat of passions raging through the material world are cleared up and the perception of Reality becomes possible. The impure tendencies (*vasanas*) of the mind create a hundred desires, and man goes on acting for the fulfilment of these desires. Consequently the cycle of birth and death continues endlessly for the ignorant man.

Desireless work is the open gateway to knowledge and liberation. The two types of work – work with desire for enjoyment and work without desire – are at the opposite poles. Two persons may be engaged in the same work. One does it for personal enjoyment and fame, and he misses the true end. Another does it without any personal thought or feeling. He achieves the true aim and becomes free. So the attitude to work is most important whatever may be the actual value of the work. The ignorant people who cannot see this difference in mental attitude are confused because they find the wise and the ignorant doing the same work externally.

The Lord condemns the poor souls who are always seeking for small rewards for their little work. They are mean-spirited and wretched men *Kripanah*. They are carried away helplessly and painfully. Why should man make himself a wretched play-thing in the hands of nature ? Why should he become a toy in the hands of fate to be turned in a whirl of

worthless pleasures and bitter sorrows? The Lord wants Arjuna to be a real man and not merely a show-boy in the hands of nature. Being born as men endowed with intellect and discrimination, it is shameful that people should make themselves slaves and bondmen to nature, forgetting the glory and blessedness of their real Self.

'Seek refuge in the equanimity born of knowledge' That is the clarian call of the Lord. Through the purified *buddhi* man attains the supreme.

Question : *What is work with desire ?*

Answer : It is wretched. (*Nishkama Karma* is the highest form of work.

Question : *In what should a man take refuge ?*

Answer : Man should take refuge in equanimity born of knowledge.

The result of performing one's own duty with evenness of mind is stated.

50\. बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ ५०

Buddhiyukto jahatiha ubhe sukruta duskrite ।
tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam ॥ 50

Meaning : बुद्धियुक्तः *buddhiyukath :* one who possesses equanimity born of wisdom, उभेसुकृतदुष्कृते *ubhe sukruta dushkrite :* both good and bad, इह *iha :* in this life, जहाति *jahati :* casts off, तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, योगाय *yogaya :* to yoga (nishkama karma), युज्यस्व *yujyasva :* devote thyself, योगः *yogah :* yoga, कौशलम् *kausalam :* (is) skill, कर्मसु *karmasu :* in actions.

Substance : The man of equanimity born of wisdom releases himself both from good and bad even in this life. Therefore strive for *nishkama karma* with an equal mind. *Yoga* is skill in action.

Commentary : *One who possesses equanimity born of wisdom :-* It means a person who is endowed with the discrimination and determining intellect, and who therefore is capable of acting with an equal mind. Such a man is not tainted by good or bad, merit or demerit. Only the bound soul attached to the world is subject to the effect of his actions, good or bad. The wise man rises above these pairs of opposites.

Great men continue to do good work for the welfare of mankind, though they have nothing to gain for themselves by such work. The Lord encourages such good work in several places in the Gita.

The seeker should first stop evil and take to good works. Then he should learn to do the good work without desire for enjoying the fruits of his good work. Thus he would release himself from the bondage of *Karma*. It is in this sense that the Lord says that the man of great mind is free from the effects of good and evil. Man attains the actionless state in *nirvikalpa asmadhi*, when the bodily organs, the senses, and the mind remain prefectly still. At all other levels, he functions with his body, mind, and the senses The wise man uses these intervals in doing good to humanity in every way he thinks fit. Their example should be followed by all seekers. They should train themselves to do good work selflessly, and this opens the path to perfection.

Skill in action : Dexterity in action is *yoga*. What is this dexterity? It is the capacity to remain detached and equal-minded while engaged in all forms of practical work in the world. Such dexterity is *yoga* The present definition – *yoga* is dexterity in action–is used to cover the entire range of human action with evenness of mind as the determining condition.

Question : *What is yoga ?*

Answer : Skill in action is *yoga* (i. e.) the capacity to act without attachment and with perfest equanimity.

51\. कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ ५१

Karmajam buddhiyukta hi phalam tyaktva manisinah ।
janma bandha vinirmuktah padam gacchantyanamayam ॥ 51

Meaning : बुद्धियुक्ताः *buddhiyuktah :* equalminded men, मनीषिणः *manishinah :* possessing wisdom, कर्मजम् *karmajam :* action-born, फलम् *phalam :* fruits, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* having abandoned, जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः *janmabandhavinirmuktah :* released from the bonds of *samasara,* अनामयम् *anamayam :* free from sorrow and evil, पदम् *padam :* position, abode, गच्छन्ति हि *gacchanti hi :* go indeed.

Substance : Wise men endowed with equanimity, having abandoned the fruits of action, go to the abode beyond all sorrow and evil.

Commentary : *Manisha* - means knowledge He who possesses discrimination and true knowledge has no concern or use for the fruits of work. It follows that discrimination is necessary to understand the principle of right action. The man who has properly understood the bondage arising from work done with desire and attachment, and the great good arising from doing work without attachment and desire, is alone fit to ascend to the abode of peace and blessedness beyond all evil and sorrow. And through discrimination alone can man work without attachment.

When the mind is purified by *nishkama karma,* knowledge of *Atma* dawns, by which man is permanently released from the cycle of birth and death, caused by *Karma.* So we understand how *Karma Yoga* leads to final liberation. Some people may doubt how *Karma* could lead to liberation. The Lord clears this doubt here. He affirms that the man who practices *nishkama karma* will certainly attain the pure sorrowless state of absolute freedom (i. e.) *Moksha.*

Released from the bonds of birth and death : Every thoughtful human being is instinctively seeking for freedom from the ills of life The Lord here points out the easiest path. He is addressing all man-kind. "O ye bound souls! If you desire for freedom from the bondage of *samsara,* if you seek for the joy and blessedness of spiritual life, do all your duties whatever they are without attachment for the fruits thereof. Surrender them to the Supreme Lord. Your mind will then become pure. Then the knowledge of *Atma* dawns of its own accord. The moment you experience the *Atmic* state, you become free and free for ever."

Whether a person is free from attachment or not is the real test of wisdom. Scholarship, power of speech, expounding the vedic texts - these are for the delight of the learned only. They are of little use unless the man is capable of discriminating the real from the unreal, and rejecting the unreal through 'Buddhi Yoga'.

Go to the abode free from sorrow : People speak of many positions in the world. They say that an emperor holds a high position. They say that Indra is the Lord of Heaven. Though they are in very high positions still the occupants are caught in the wheel of *samsara.* They have birth and death, joy and sorrow pleasure and pain. There is only one state, one position, where there is not the least touch of pain or sorrow, where it is all an ocean of supreme bliss, and that position is the *Atma* State, the domain of *Brahma Jnana.* How to attain it? The Lord shows the path here. Do your duty without attachment and desire for the fruits thereof. That is the secret of *Karma Yoga* and its consummation is *Brahmajnana.*

Question : *What is the sign of a great man ?*

Answer : The ability to perform *nishkama-karma* is the distinguishing sign of a great man.

Question : *What will he attain ?*

Answer : Emancipation and *Moksha.*

Question : *What is Moksha ?*

Answer : It is freedom from *samsara,* from the cycle of birth and death.

The Lord states when liberation is attained.

52. यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥ ५२

Yada te mohakalilam buddhir vyatitarisyati ।
tada gantasi nirvedam srotavyasya cha ॥ 52

Meaning : यदा *yada :* when, ते *te :* your, बुद्धिः *buddhih :* intellect, मोहकलिलम् *mohakalilam :* mire of delusion, व्यतितरिष्यति *vyatitarishyati :* crosses, तदा *tada :* then, श्रोतव्यस्य *srotavya-sya :* of what has to be heard, श्रुतस्यच *srutasya cha :* and of what has been heard, निर्वेदम् *nirvedam :* dispassion, गन्तासि *gantasi :* you will attain.

Substance : When your mind crosses the mire of delusion, you will then attain to indifference of what has been heard and what has to be heard.

Commentary : The aim of human individual is to cross the mire of delusion, the darkness of ignorance. This ignorance and delusion is called in philosophical terminology *Maya* or nature. Beyond darkness is *Atma* - the abode of light. The Vedas declare it so - (*Thamasastu pare*). To reach that realm of light, one has to cross the ocean of darkness and go beyond sorrow and delusion (*soka and moha*). Through *nishkama-karma*, through hearing the truth, through concentration and meditation on the truth, one should realise the light of *Atma*. When he arrives at this state, he is filled with the bliss of *Atma*, and has no further need to hear or think of the *sastras* He becomes indifferent to them. One should understand that this is spoken of about men of Self-realisation. The seeker should continue to hear the Truth enshrined in the Vedas and the Sastras till he attains the higher state of direct perception of the Reality.

Mire of delusion : The impure tendencies (*vasanas*) stagnating in the mind through several births are the mire of delusion. It is the duty of the seeker to purify himself by spiritual practices like *nishkama-karma* and enquiry into the Self.

53. श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिः तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ५३

Srutivipratipanna te yada sthasyati nischala ,
samadhav achala buddhih tada yogam avapsyasi , 53

Meaning : श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना *srutivipratipanna :* perplexed by what you have heard of the various *sastras*, ते *te :* your, बुद्धिः *buddhih :* intellect, यदा *yada :* when, निश्चला *nischala :* unshaken, समाधौ *samadhau :* in samadhi, अचला *achala :* immovable, स्थास्यति *sthasyati :* remains fixed, तदा *tada :* then, योगम् *yogam :* union with the Supreme Being, अवाप्स्यसि *avapsyasi :* (you) shall attain.

Substance : When your intellect which is perplexed by hearing the various *sastras* becomes steady and immovable in ecstatic concentration, then you shall attain union with the Supreme Being.

Commentary : Naturally the seeker in the initial stages is distracted by the innumerable rites and rituals mentioned in the *Vedas* for the purpose of acquiring material pleasures and prosperity. The mind is distracted by the impulse of the mind, by the outgoing power of the senses in contact with physical objects. Such distraction is a great obstacle to Self-realisation. By the practice of discrimination and *nishkama-karma*, these destractions gradually disappear. The mind is then calm and collected because it has then overcome the tendency to run after material things. It is gradually fixed in the Self-state and man experiences the bliss of Self-realisation. That is *yoga*. *Yoga* means union of the individual self with the Supreme Being. The Ego which keeps up the delusion of being a separate quantity is merged in its own source (i.e.) Self, and then there remains only one *Atma*, and not two distinct entities as imagined by the deluded mind. Like a bit of salt being dissolved in the ocean, the Ego dissolves itself in the ocean of *Sat-Chit-Anand*. Then there is supreme peace of blessedness. Till that consummation the mind is troubled When *yoga* takes place, there is no mind or Ego existing separately from the Supreme Being. The mind becomes still and immovable, because it has become one with That. Then it is all one indivisible ocean of bliss and blessedness.

So long as the mind is unsteady, *yoga* (union with the Self) cannot happen. That is why the Lord insists on immo-

vable steadiness of mind ('nischala', 'achala'). If the hand is shaking it is impossible to pass the thread through the eye of the needle. So also, if the mind is split and fragmented, it cannot enter the Atmic plane.

Therefore the seeker should hear of *Atma* and endeavour to think and meditate on That. He should listen for a brief while and spend more time in concentration and meditation. That is the way. More over, rejecting the objective world as an illusion he should look inside into the fathomless spirit pure, calm, serene, and immovable. The more one practices this inward look, the nearer he moves towards *Atma*, and furthers away from the superficial distractions of the material world. Thus a moment arrives when, the mind gets itself completely dissolved in *Atma* in *samadhi*

There is no time-limit for this consummation. When the mind becomes perfectly still and motionless, and is turned inwards, *samadhi* is reached, and immediately man attains liberation by the knowledge of his real Self.

Question : *When does man attain Yoga ?*

Answer : When the intellect is pure and steady in ecstatic concentration, union with the Self takes place.

Arjuna asks the Lord to tell him the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom

अर्जुन उवाच

54. स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥ ५४

Arjuna uvacha

Sthitaprajnasya ka bhasha samadhisthasya kesava
sthitadhih kim prabhasheta kim asita vrajeta kim 54

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said:

Meaning : केशव *Kesava :* O Krishna !, समाधिस्थस्य *samadhisthasya :* merged in the supreme conscious state, स्थितप्रज्ञस्य *sthitaprajnasya :* of the man of steady wisdom, भाषा *bhasha :* description ? का *ka :* what, स्थितधीः *sthitadhih :* the man of steady

intellect, किम् *kim :* what, प्रभाषेत *prabhasheta :* would speak ? किम् *kim :* (what) how, आसीत *asita :* sits ? किम् *kim :* (what) how, व्रजेत *vrajeta :* moves ?

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! What are the characteristics of a man of steady wisdom ? How does the man merged in the super-conscious state, sit and move ?

Commentary : Arjuna was anxious to know the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom, the man of self-realisation, the *Jivanmukta*. It is possible for a man to appear outwardly to be in a state of *samadhi*. But that is only self-deception and deception of the world. We should be able rightly to know whether a person is really a *Jivanmukta* or not. Arjuna asks the Lord to describe the characteristics of the *Jivanmukta*, so that he could understand who they are and how they live. Of course, man's character is reflected in his speech and action. The ignorant man is discovered by his *tamasic* and *rajasic* qualities, and the impurity of his life and work. In the life of *Jivanmukta* we find peace and purity, divinity and blessedness. So if one observes, and keeps company with a *Jivanmukta*, he would be able to reform his life accordingly, and rise above delusion and ignorance.

Man of steady wisdom and steady intellect (sthitapragnah) : These are men of steady wisdom and knowledge (i. e.) men whose mind is firmly established in *Atma*. The others are of unsteady and infirm wisdom. Their intellect is not purified, nor are their minds rooted in the Self. They are attached to the material world. So the aspirant should follow the footsteps of the *sthitaprajna* and attain to higher status of spiritual illumination by modelling his life accordingly.

This part of the Gita - from 54 to 72 verses describing the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* is very important. Mahatma Gandhi used to recite these verses as a spiritual discipline and he has practically acquired that state of steady wisdom by the purity of his discriminative intellect, by his surrender to God, and by his *nishkama-karma*.

The Lord explains the characteristics of 'sthitaprajna' *in the following 18* verses.

श्री भगवानुवाच

55. प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ ५५

Prajahati yada kaman sarvan partha manogathan ।
atmanyeva'tmana tustah sthitaprajna stado'cyate ॥ 55

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha :* The Blessed Lord said*:*

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! यदा *yada :* when, मनोगतान् *manogatan :* of the mind, सर्वान् *sarvan :* all, कामान् *kaman :* desires, प्रजहाति *prajahati :* casts off, आत्मनि *atmani :* in Atma, एव *eva :* only, आत्मना *atmana* : by the self (mind), तुष्टः *tushtah* : contented, तदा *tada* : then, स्थितप्रज्ञः *sthitaprajnah* : man of steady wisdom, उच्यते *uchyate* : (he) is called.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : When a man renounces completely all the desires of the mind, and when he is fully satisfied with his mind fixed in *Atma*, then he is declared to be a *sthitaprajna.*

Commentary : Many people go to a holy man and ask him, "Revered Sir, when shall we be free from the ills of life ?" The holy man repeats this *sloka* in response to their appeal. The auspicious moment of liberation from the ills of life is in the hands of each individual. When you have acquired faith in the eternal Self, and when you carry out the precepts of spiritual discipline, when the mind is brought to a state of equanimity, and when it is fixed steadily in *Atma,* that very moment man is liberated and he becomes a *jivanmukta.* Liberation is a natural process and not a sudden high-jump into the spiritual realm. The *Sastras* and the holy men point the way, and the seeker has to realise the Truth by his own self-effort.

Now, what is that practice which leads to emancipation ? Desires should be given up. The Lord uses a strong term *Prajahati* instead of *jahati*, implying thereby that desires should be given up thoroughly, and again, not simply some desires but all desires, without leaving the least residue in the innermost recesses of the mind. This is the inevitable and universal law There is no other way. Even if the smallest seed of desire is left in the pit of the mind, it sprouts and grows unconsciously, and there is always the danger of the seeker being driven out of the self-state and once again plunged in the mire of delusion.

That is what the *sastras* say. It is not sufficient to partly give up all desires or totally give up some desires only. All desires should be given up totally for all time.

Desires lie concealed in the unseen nooks and corners of the mind. They survive in the seed form of mental impressions. Whenever they come into contact with the objects of the material world through the senses, they spring up with subtle and unresistable force and cause *samsara.* Bondage and delusion are not in the outside world. They are inside the mind. It is here that the spiritual operation should be conducted, and the diseased mind-stuff cut off. The mind is some-thing like dark cavern which is only partially visible to man. The lamp of discrimination should be lighted, and there should be a thorough search of the vast dark region to find out the last and least living desire and burn it up into ashes. Just as all the small pebbles in grain are sifted and thrown off before food is prepared, just as all the weeds are cleared off when the garden plants are grown, just as all worms, germs and pests are removed from vegetable plants, even so all the desires should be carefully searched for and rejected by the seeker.

These desires are of very ancient origin, as the darkness in an undiscovered cave is there from time immemorial. They have taken root in the subtle body through innumerable births. They are mental impressions (*vasanas*). Having established themselves firmly by spreading their roots deep into the subtle body, they cause *samsara*, the endless cycle of birth and death for man. They should be pulled out along with the roots. Other-

wise, some little desire left untouched is capable of causing a birth or even a whole series of births. Particles of fire from a half-extinguished heath is capable of destroying a whole colony of huts. Therefore the Lord here insits on complete renunciation of all desires forever. Towards this final renunciation, enquiry into the Self, discrimination of the real and the unreal, surrender to the Lord, company of holy men, and such other practices should be undertaken by the aspirant.

The Lord immediately explains what happens when the mind is purified of all desire-breeding impressions.

Satisfied with his mind fixed in Atma : This is the consumation of all spiritual practices – to be perfectly satisfied in the Self by the self. When all the desires are cast off, the mind remains quiet in *Atma*-the very source of all bliss. Fullness of joy – where is it to be found ? It is in the Self. Bliss is not outside in the external objective world. One may go on searching for it in earth and sky, in the fourteen worlds up and down inch by inch, he cannot find it, because it is not there. Of what use is it to search for a thing in a place where it is not ? And yet, such is the power of *maya* that man seeks for it, inspite of repeated failures and disappointments – disasters and calamities, in the objective world. The search is carried and birth after birth, till man tired and exhausted by his pursuit of the hare's horn, may be out of sheer despair, turns inwards into his own Self, and Lo ! the miracle happens, he finds that joy in his own self; that joy and Self are one. The mind is purified, and in the purified mind, the natural and spontaneous bliss of *Atma* is reflected in a flash. This is the secret of Vedanta. Brahmananda is not a newly manufactured article by the skill and technology of man. It is already there by its own right, already full, unpolluted and uncontaminated by any material taint. But it is covered up, misunderstood, and muddled up with extraneous things. To remove the impure covering and discover the natural *ananda* is the aim of Vedanta. Now, the man of discrimination clears up the dust and garbage from his mind, and finds that the happiness which he has been seeking from

everywhere in the world, is in his own Self. When the outer covering of moss is cleared, pure water is seen. When the dust is cleared off a mirror, it shows a clear reflection. So also, when the impurity of mind in the form of desire is taken away, the seer *Atma* reveals himself as the pure and perfect Self of man. The search for happiness ends hare. So the Lord points out both the aspects of Vedanta-the practice of equanimity and desirelessness, and next the goal to be attained. The practice is the renunciation of desire, and the goal is the experience of *Atma*. The first is *Sadhana*, and the second is *Sadhya*. The practice leads to the goal.

So the first outstanding quality of the *sthitaprajna* is untainted and perfect bliss. This is his badge, his flag, the banner of his achievement. He is distinguished from others by this characteristic feature. When we find the ignorant people plunged in fear and sorrow, distracted and restless, he alone remains free and blissful in the midst of the ever-changing spectacle of human life.

Question : *What is the characteristic mark of* sthitaprajna *?*

Answer : Giving up of all desires, and contentment in the Self are his qualities.

Question : *Where is uncontaminated joy ?*

Answer : In the Self – *Atma*.

56. दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ ५६

Duhkheshvanudvignamanah sukheshu vigatasprihah |
vita raga bhaya krodhah sthitadhir munir uchyate || 56

Meaning : दुःखेषु *dhukheshu* : in sorrow, अनुद्विग्नमनाः *anudvignamanah* : without mental agitation, सुखेषु *sukheshu* : in pleasures, विगतस्पृहः *vigatasprihah* : without hankering, वीतरागभयक्रोधः *vitaragabhayakrodhah* : free from attachment, fear and hatred, मुनिः *munih* : sage, स्थितधीः *sthitadhih* : man of steady wisdom, उच्यते *uchyate* : (he) is called.

Substance : He whose mind is not troubled in sorrow, who does not hanker after pleasures and is free from attachment fear and hatred, is called the sage of steady wisdom.

Commentary : The characteristics of *sthitaprajna* are further elaborated here.

Mind not troubled in sorrow : The mind of the *sthitaprajna* is not troubled by the sorrows, disasters and calamities of life. The sun who is far above the storm clouds is not affected by thunder, lightening and rain. In the same way, pain and pleasure are the natural reactions of the mind to external phenomenon, and *Atma* beeing above the mind (i.e.) transcending the mind, is not affected by its modifications. It remains as the witness of the mind, in the same way, as the Sun is just the witness of what is happening in the lower region of the earth. Vasishta explains to Sri Rama that just as arrows cannot powder a mountain, just as the sea-waves cannot move the mountain on the shore, just as the lotus creeper cannot bind an elephant, even so the sorrows and troubles of the world cannot affect the *Jivanmukta*, the *sthitaprajna*.

Who does not hanker after pleasures : The *Stitaprajna* does not hanker after the pleasures of the body and the senses. He is not thrown off his Self-state when pleasant and delighted things come to him. Pain and pleasure are just two different waves of the mind. One wave is called pleasure and another is called pain. Both are caused by the contact of the mind with external objects. If the object is agreeable, there is a wave of pleasure. If the object is undesirable, there is a wave of pain. The *sthitaprajna* whose mind is firmly established in *Atma* is not moved one way or the other when pleasant and unpleasant things occur The *Jivanmukta* has found himself one with the ocean of bliss, and as such how can he think of attaching himself to any kind of material pleasure ? He knows that these little pleasures are only ripples on the surface of the ocean of bliss and that they are shadowy reflections of his own Self. No one can cling to the pleasures of a dream when he awakens from the dream. If really he desires such pleasures, it only

shows that he has not yet fully awakened from the dream. So also, he who clings to worldly pleasures arising from the senses and sense objects, is not a *Sthitaprajna*. We have the shining example of Suka, as the *Sthitaprajna* par excellence. If today we come across a man of such calibre who can look upon pain and pleasure with an equal eye, verily we have to honour him as a *Jivanmukta*.

Free from attachment, fear and hatred : Again, it is pointed out that the *Sthitaprajna* is free from attachment, fear and harted. To the man of knowledge, every thing appears as *Atma*, in the same way as everything appears as material objects to the ignorant man. What then can he desire ? Whom can he fear or hate ? The same truth is declared in the Esavasya Upanishad also.

For the wise man who knows that every thing is that one *Atma*, there can be no delusion and no sorrow. He has realised that all that exists is only the Supreme Self and nothing else. Fear and hatred arise only when there is a second thing. When all this is one indivisible *Satchidananda* Absolute, where is fear and where is hate ? He is himself every thing. Can he hate himself ? Can he fear himself ? No. That is the state of the *Jivanmukta*, the *Sthitaprajna* – supreme and transcendental

Munih : The sage who is engaged in speechless absorption in the Self is a *Muni*. Only such a strong-willed man of action can ascend the peak of the *Soham*, (I am he) mount. The idle and the lethargic have no chance of winning the goal. The sage who has acquired one-pointed concentration in the Self is *Sthitaprajna*.

Question : *What further qualities of the* sthitaprajna *are mentioned here ?*

Answer : He is not distressed by sorrow, does not hanker after pleasure, is free from attachment, fear and hatred.

57. यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५७

Yah sarvatra nabhisnehastat-tat prapya subhasubham ।
na'bhinandati na dvesti tasya prajna pratishtita ॥ 57

Meaning : यः *yah* : (he) who, सर्वत्र *sarvatra* : in all things, अनभिस्नेहः *anabhi snehah* : without attachment, तत् तत् *tat - tat* : that and that, शुभाशुभम् *subhasubham* : good and bad, प्राप्य *prapya* : having obtained, नाभिनन्दति *nabhinandati* : does not rejoice, नद्वेष्टि *nadveshti* : does not hate, तस्य *tasya* : his, प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishtita* : is fixed.

Substance : He who has no attachement to anything anywhere, who does not rejoice and hate when good and bad things happen, his wisdom is fixed and steady. He is a *sthitaprajna*.

Commentary : In the Gita we find that the Lord uses the general term *yah* (anybody) without limiting its scope to any caste or creed, race or nationality. Any one who has acquired firmness in the wisdom of the Self is declared to be a *Sthitaprajna* whoever he is and whatever may be his caste or creed. This is the sign of the universality of the Gita.

Without attachment in all things : One should be detached from and indifferent to every thing in the world. Of course no one is attached to unpleasant things. A similar attitude is to be cultivated towards pleasant things also. Things pleasant and unpleasant are both in the domain of *Maya*, and the Self is beyond *Maya*, and so these lower modifications do not in any way affect the Self. The *sthitaprajna* having reached the Self-state is not at all concerned with them. The man of wisdom does not seek for any thing. And yet, nature brings many things to him, both pleasant and unpleasant in the course of his life. But he neither rejoices nor laments when these things happen of their own accord. He remains immovable like a mountain in a state of perfect equanimity. This is the mark of *sthitaprajna*. It should be understood that the Lord is not advocating a cowardly spirit desisting from the battle-field of life with all its duties, obligations and responsibilities. Detachment is not neglect of duty. In fact Arjuna was confused at first when he thought that he could attain peace by running away from the battle-field and taking up the life of

a mendicant. The whole of the Gita is intended to emphasise that the challenge of life should be met with courage, equanimity, and knowledge of the real Self. Frustration may put on the garb of detachment. Cowardice may shine under the mask of renunciation. These are the common delusions of a weak mind. The Lord here insists that the good and the bad should be met without elation or depression. The *sthitaprajna* knows how to live life under all circumstances with mental equipose and the joy of wisdom.

Question : *What other characteristics of the sthitaprajna are mentioned here ?*

Answer : The *sthitaprajna* is not attached to any thing, he does not rejoice or hate when plesant and unpleasant things happen in the course of his life.

58. यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५८

Yada samharate chayam kurmo'nganiva sarvasah ।
indriyanindriyarthebhya stasya prajna pratisthita । 58

Meaning : यदाः *yada* : when, अयम् *ayam* : this (yogi), कूर्मः *kurmah* : tortoise, अङ्गानि इव *angani iva* : like its limbs, इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः *indriyebhyah* : from the sense-objects like sound, touch, etc., इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, सर्वशः चः *sarvasah cha* : and every where, संहरते *samharate* : withdraws, (तदा) (*tada* : then), तस्य *tasya* : his (the yogi's), प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishita* : is fixed.

Substance : When the yogi, like the tortoise drawing back its limbs into its own shell withdraws all the senses from the sense-objects, his wisdom is firmly fixed. He is then a *sthitapragna*.

Commentary : For self-realisation (Moksha) control of the senses is essential. When the senses are drawn back from contact with the sense-objects like, sound, colour etc. then the intellect is rooted in *Atma* The same truth is stated by **Patanjali** in the sutras *Yogaschittavrittinirodhah, tadadra-*

shtuh svarupe Avasthanum. These two sutras are affirmed by the verse. It means that the senses, which by their nature run after wordly objects should be drawn back, and the mind centred in *Atma*. When this is done firmly, and when there is no deviation from the Self, one's knowledge becomes perfect.

This idea is very clearly brought out by means of an illustration. The tortoise withdraws all its limbs into its own shell at the slightest apprehension of danger from outside. Even if the shell is hacked to pieces it would not extend its limbs. The yogi, like the tortoise should draw back his senses from the objective world, and settle himself. in the Self It is not enough to restrain one of the senses from one set of objects. Of course, if one sense is controlled, it will make the control of the others easy. The yogi should withdraw all the senses from all the wordly objects. That is why the word *sarvasah* is used. Even if all the doors are closed except one, through that one door dacoits may enter the house. Even if one window is kept open, a gust of wind from it may extinguish the lamp. So it is absolutely necessary that all the senses should be turned back, and there should be no contact with the external world. It is the sense-organs which make the person aware of the outside world When they are drawn back there is no external world. In deep sleep there is no external world because the senses are not functioning. Similarly the yogi should stop the operation of the senses in his fully conscious state, and then the mind sees the Self within. Sense-restraint is thus the first and foremost of all spiritual disciplines.

Question : *When does a man become* 'sthitaprajna' ?

Answer : When he withdraws all the senses from the objective world and turns his mind inwards, he becomes a '*sthitaprajna*'.

When Atma is perceived, all the latent tendencies of the mind are removed.

59. विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ ५९

Vishaya vinivartante niraharasya dehinah ।
rasavarjam raso'pyasya param dristva nivartate ॥ 59

Meaning : निराहारस्य *niraharasya* : abstinent, देहिन: *dehinah* : of the embodied being, रसवर्जम् *rasavarjyam* : except the longing, विषया: *vishayah* : the objects of senses, विनिवर्तन्ते *vinivartante* : turn away, परम् *param* : the supreme, दृष्ट्वा *drishtva* : having seen, रसोपि *rasahapi* : even the longing (taste), अस्य *Asya* : of his, निवर्तते *nivartate* : turns away.

Substance : When a man rejects the sense-objects by withdrawing the senses, he becomes free from the sense-world only. The longing or taste for them still remains in the mind. Even this longing is removed when the Self is perceived.

Commentary : An essential secret of spiritual realisation is revealed here.

Restraining the senses is not alone enough. Direct perception of the Supreme is necessary. No doubt by restraining the senses, the objective world is repelled. But the taste for man remains in the form of subtle tendencies (*vasanas*) and unless these *vasanas* are removed steadiness of wisdom is not possible. Latent longing may rush forth when the restraint is relaxed. Even temporary causes like sickness and calamity may bring about a partial rejection of the sense-world. But when these external causes pass away, the subtle *vasanas* break forth with all their original force. Hence the Lord declares that only when the Supreme is perceived, these *vasanas* are finally destroyed.

The destruction of the *vasanas*, the destruction of the mind, and direct experience of the Self take place simultaneously. In the previous verse, it is said that by destroying the *vasanas*, self-knowledge comes to man and in this verse, it is stated that Self-knowledge destroys the *vasanas*. These are two aspects of the same Truth.

Destruction of the *vasanas* is not an easy task. It is the only path to *Moksha*. If one achieves it, every thing is achieved. The innumerable experiences of the past births have taken root in the mind in the form of powerful tendencies, attitudes and

propensities. They work through the senses, and the senses function by contact with the world. The material world provides the widest field of activity and the food for the senses. Through many births, the senses have been accustomed to browse at will on these delicious pasture lands of material pleasures. To deny them this form of food means to restrain the senses and prevent them from contacting the objective world. But this does not solve the problem. The taste for the objects would still be there in the mind; whenever opportunity arises the mental tendencies spring forth to grasp the illusory pleasures, because the taste for them is not dead. So the attempt at first is to withdraw the senses from the sense-objects (*Pratyahara)* and next to destroy the taste for them concealed in seed-form in the mind. When the *vasanas* are destroyed, man attains freedom, and the objective world is then powerless to influence him. It is stated here that direct Self-knowledge alone is capable of destroying the *vasanas.*

One must understand clearly the reality of *Atma,* and the illusory nature of the world. One must hear of *Atma* often and often. He should think of *Atma* and contemplate on it frequently and intensely. He should know for certain that the world before his eyes is a painful illusion, that it is full of sorrow and suffering, that there is no permanent joy anywhere else except in *Atma,* and that *Atma* alone is the all-pervading substratum of the entire universe. As one thinks and acts on these fundamental truths, his attachment and craving for sense-pleasures become less and less and as they become weaker and weaker, the bliss of Self is experienced more and more, till finally the bliss and blessedness of the Self swallows up the universe and converts it into its own element.

Abstinent : Some interpret this as fasting. Here what is meant is not the abstinence of food, but the rejection of all sense-experiences.

Question : *Is it sufficient for liberation to control the senses ?*

Answer : No. The craving for them in the mind should be destroyed.

Question : *How is that done ?*

Answer : By direct perception of *Atma.*

If the senses are not controlled, they do harm, and ti is difficult to cont ol them.

60. यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ ६०

Yatato hyapi kaunteya purushasya vipaschitah ।
indriyani pramathini haranti prasabham manah ॥ 60

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya* : O Arjuna ! यततः अपि *yatatah api* : Striving for Atma jnana, विपश्चितः पुरुषस्य *vipaschitah purushasya* : even of learned man, मनः *mahah* : Mind, प्रमाथीनि *pramathini* : turbulent, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, प्रसभम् *prasabham* : forcefully, हरन्ति *haranti hi* : draw indeed.

Substance : O Arjuna ! The turbulent senses carry away the mind even of the learned man though he is striving to control them.

Commentary : Even the learned man, well versed in the *Sastras* and vedic lore, is merely a play-thing under the power of the mind and the senses. The mind does not easily turn inwards. It is pushed out, as it were, and through the senses attaches itself to the objective world. If this is so in the case of a learned man who has understood the truth intellectually at least, what about the others ? Similarly, the turbulent senses defeat and perplex the man who is trying his best to control them. The fate of the man who has not understood this principle can easily be imagined The senses draw the mind and drive it on in different directions. He is restless and distracted. He becomes utterly the slave of the uncontrollable senses. He who should have been the master is turned a slave ! That is the unfortunate position in which many live and die.

Even the Pandits, the learned exponents of religion and philosophy, are carried off by the power of the senses and the attractions of the sense-world.

In the heart of every human being, the struggle between the real and the unreal, between good and evil, is taking place to some extent. As man tries to get some divine force into himself in this struggle, *Maya* with all the regiments, spies, fifth columns, is increasing her own forces to neutralise the divine force which the seeker is gathering bit by bit. This *verse* describes an aspect of the struggle. The seeker should muster greater and greater divine strength by acquiring divine qualities, and then only can he hope to overpower the enemy. No one need be discouraged by the power of the senses Indeed they are powerful. But what of it? The divinity within is far more powerful. If a pin is placed between two magnets the one which has the lesser power can do nothing. So is man placed between the sense world on the one side and the Divine on the other. The Divine is a far greater magnet and finally draws man to Himself. By control *(sama* and *dama)* practised continuously, the necessary power is acquired by the seeker, and ultimately victory is his. Only no relaxation of vigilance, no neglect of effort should be allowed to interrupt the practice. The same exhortation is to be found in the next *verse*

Learned : Mere book-learning is not enough. Spiritual experience is necessary

Perhaps, so far, people have under-estimated the strength of the enemy, and consequently their effort has not been as intense as it should be. But now, the Lord has given us an idea of the hostile forces which one has to conquer. The first thing in a war is to know the full potency of the enemy forces, and only then the defence and offence could be made with adequate strength and suitable strategy.

Question : *What is the power of the senses ?*

Answer : The senses are so powerful as to draw away the mind of a scholar even, who is striving for liberation.

61. तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६१

Tani sarvani samyamya yuktha asita matparah ।
vase hi yasye'ndriyani tasya prajna pratisthitha । 61

Meaning : तानि *tani* : them (the senses), सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, संयम्य *samyamya* : restraining, युक्तः *yuktah* : harmonised, मत्परः *matparah* : intent on Me, आसीत *asita* : should sit, हि *hi* : because, यस्य *yasya* : whose, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, वशे *vase* : under control, तस्य *tasya* : his, प्रज्ञा *prajna* : wisdom, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishtita* : (is) steady.

Substance : Having restrained all the senses the harmonised should sit intent on Me. His wisdom is steady whose senses are under control.

Commentary : All the senses should be controlled not merely one or two. A pot with a single small hole cannot retain water. So sense-pleasures of any kind will lead to a downright fall from the spiritual aim. This is emphasised again and again by the Lord. That is why the word *Sarvani* (all) is used frequently verse after verse.

In this verse, two practises are mentioned : (1) Control of the senses from running out and attaching themselves to sense-objects, and (2) directing the mind towards the Supreme Lord (merging in *Atma*. It means rejection of the objective world (*Drisya*) and identification with the subject (Drik). Both practices are necessary. The first practice alone is not enough In sleep, the senses do not function, and the objective world is not there. And yet there is no knowledge. So identification with the subject (Drik) is essential, while rejecting the objective world (*Drishya*). It is not enough to clear debts; one should acquire some property. Then he is satisfied. Similarly let a man ceaselessly reject the sense-world as it appears and at the same time, let him think of himself as the pure and perfect *Atma*. Again, the second practice meditating on *Atma*, is no doubt good, but without the first, the seeker is sure to fall off from the high aim. So the two practices should be undertaken simultaneously.

Harmonised : With what ?—not with the sense-world, but with the Self. It means one who is in super-conscious state (*Samadhi*).

With mind absorbed in Me : Lord Krishna is God Himself. So, when He speaks of *Me*, the Supreme Self is suggested.

The Dualists contemplate the sublime and beautiful form of Lord Krishna, and are entranced by it. They sing His name in a thousand ways, they find delight in his glory, and the wonderful attributes of divinity in Him. Blessed are those devotees who have renounced the world and live in the Lord in an ecstasy of joy.

The *Advaitin* makes no difference between the Lord and the Supreme Self. They are one and the same. This is the finest fruit of Vedanta, that there is only one indivisible existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. In that state, God and the devotee become one. The Gita is the scripture both for the devotees-*Bhaktas* and the *Jnanis*. So the reader should interpret these expressions correctly, and not fall into the error of accepting only one aspect of truth and rejecting the other. In this verse, the first line points out the practice, and the second line the result of the practice. The first line says that the seeker should control the senses and establish himself in *Atma*. The second line declares that such a man acquires firm knowledge of the Supreme.

Without sense-control the mind cannot be fixed in *Atma*. Even if one tries to do so, it is immediately drawn out by the distracting power of the senses. The energy acquired through meditation is frittered away by indulgence in sense-pleasures. The peasant may work hard all the day to water the field, but if there are rat-holes, all the water goes into them, and nothing remains to water the field. So, these rat-holes should be plugged first, and then the work of the peasant bears fruit. Even so, the rat-holes of sense-desires and sense-pleasures should be stopped first, so that whatever divine contemplation one may practice might gather strength gradually and lead to final illumination. Let the seekers understand the importance of sense-control for Self-realisation, and follow the practice with courage and determination.

Question : *What are the means of Self-realisation ?*

Answer : Restraining the senses and fixing the mind in *Atma* are the ways to Self-realisation.

Question : *What knowledge is firm ?*

Answer : The knowledge of the man who has controlled all the senses remains firm.

The Lord warns the disciple about the disastrous consequences of yielding to sense pleasures.

62. ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात् संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२

Dhyayato vishayan pumsah sangasteshupajayate ।
sangat samjayate kamah kamat krydho'bhijayate । 62

63. क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३

Krodhadbhavati sammohah sammohat smritivibhramah ।
smritibhramsa dbuddhinaso buddhinasat pranasyati ॥ 63

Meaning : विषयान् *vishayan* : the objects of the senses, ध्यायतः *dhyayatah* : contemplating, पुंसः *pumsah* : of a man, तेषु *teshu* : in them, सङ्गः *sangah* : attachement, उपजायते *upajayate* : arises, सङ्गात् *sangat* : from attachment, कामः *kamah* : desire, संजायते *sanjayate* : is born, कामात् *kamat* : from desire, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, अभिजायते *abhijayate* : arises, क्रोधात् : *krodhat* : from anger, संमोहः *sammohah* : delusion, भवति *bhavati* : comes, संमोहात् *sammohat* : from delusion, स्मृतिविभ्रमः *smritivibhramah* : loss of memory, स्मृतिभ्रंशात् *smritibhramsat* : from loss of memory, बुद्धिनाशः *buddhinasah* : destruction of discrimination, बुद्धिनाशात् *buddhinasat* : from destruction of discrimination, प्रणश्यति *pranasyati* : (he) perishes.

Substance : As man contemplates sense-objects, attachment for them arises, from attachment, desire for them will be born, from desire arises anger, from anger comes delusion, from delusion comes loss of memory, from loss of memory, comes destruction of discrimination, and from destruction of discrimination he perishes.

Commentary : These two verses are of great importance for the spiritual aspirant. The gradual process of Self-destruction is traced here with psychological accuracy.

The contemplation of sense-objects is the first step in the downward process. The enemy enters the house in the guise of a friend, and gradually occupies the whole house, and pushes the owner out. There is an English Proverb— "Give me room to sit down, and I can make room to lie down." Such is the power of *Maya* that from very small imperceptable beginnings, it grows almost to infinity.

At first, man may not have any particular attachment to anything, but gradually the senses prompted by past *samskaras* settle on a particular object and the mind begins to contemplate it. So a kind of contact is established between the mind and that object, the senses being the connecting link. The object may be anything from a fashionable piece of dress to the glamour and glory of an Emperor. That contact becomes stronger and stronger, and a deeply felt desire arises to possess and enjoy that object. This is *Kama*. It is the worst enemy of man. *Mahapapma* (all sinfull)-such is the Lord's description of *Kama*. When *Kama* enters the mind, it is like a reptile moving about in the house. The occupants of that house live in horrible dread and there is every danger of their being stung and killed. Such indeed is the destructive power of *Kama* when it enters the human heart. It is indeed better to stop it before it enters the mind. But if it enters stealthily, the moment one discovers it, he should throw it out with all the power at his command. Otherwise, the *Kama* in its wake will bring his associates, friends and other destructive forces, like *Krodha* and throw down the unfortunate man into destruction. All this is vividly described by the teacher of the

Gita. Let the seeker know who his enemies are, how they work, how they tempt, how they subdue, and how they finally destroy man.

When *Kama* enters the mind, just behind him comes *Krodha*. These two are eternal associates of evil. One cannot be without the other. Such is the closeness of their intimacy. The frustration of desire causes anger, and hatred. *Krodha* is like powerful alchohal. Passion like poison, fills the whole personality. He trembles and shivers all over the body, the eyes become blood-shot, speech becomes incoherent, abuse and violence are indulged in, and the human being is transformed into a wild animal which is deprived of a piece of flesh when it is hungry. He behaves like a man possessed by an evil-spirit. So it is said here that delusion (*sammoha*) overpowers him by anger (*Krodha*). Delusion causes loss of memory.

The deluded man, fired with anger, forgets the people with whom he is dealing. Be he a father or *Guru*, of friend; the angry man abuses him and strikes him down. For the time being, he forgets the status of the person, honour for the father, reverence for the Guru, affection for the friend. This is loss of memory (*smritivibramah*) of one's Self. So long as a man holds on to the Self, anger cannot overpower him. But the moment that memory of his true Self is lost, man becomes a beast.

From loss of memory, discrimination of right and wrong is lost. By the destruction of the grinding intellect, man perishes. Therefore the Lord warns the aspirant to keep himself away from sense-objects, and practise self-control.

Contemplating the objects of the senses : It is important to note that the word contemplation is used in this context. Contemplation is not a new faculty to be acquired. Every man is constantly in a state of contemplation. Some contemplate wealth, others the pleasure of wine, others the pleasures of sex, others the dignity of position, name and fame. So the world moves on, each one attached to a particular desire, meditating on it, and trying to realise it as much as possible. So contemplation is the natural faculty

of the mind. The wise man who has understood the worthlessness of the worldly pleasures, turns his mind to God, and contemplates the purity and glory of God. He attains pure joy and endless peace.

What is required is that the same power of contemplation which runs after worldly objects, should be given a new direction towards a spiritual aim. We come across stories of men immersed in sensuality, suddenly turning out to be pure devotees of God. What happens in such cases is that the man, by some cause or other, discovers the filthy nature of sensual pleasures, and turns away from them, and the mind naturally runs for the pure and perfect, with the same force and momentum as it formerly had for sense-pleasures. The point is contemplation should be directed towards *Atma*, and not towards sense-objects. Prahlada asked the Lord for the same boon, that his mind may always be fixed in the Lord and not in the ephemeral world.

Question : *What is the cause of man's destruction ?*

Answer : Contemplation of the sense-world is the first in the chain of causes leading to destruction.

Question : *How does it lead to man's destruction ?*

Answer : By the contemplation of the sens-objects desire for them arises. Desire leads to anger when it is frustrated, anger causes delusion, delusion causes loss of memory, loss of memory causes destruction of discrimination, and by the loss of discrimination, man perishes.

The Lord explains the way to peace.

64. रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥ ६४

Raga dvesha viyuktaistu vishayan indriyaischaran ।
atmavasyai rvidheyatma prasadam adhigacchati ॥ 64·

Meaning : तु *tu* : but, विधेयात्मा *vidheyatma* : the self-controlled, रागद्वेषवियुक्तैः *ragadveshaviyukataih* : free from attraction and repulsion, आत्मवश्यैः *atmavasyaih* : self-restrained, इन्द्रियैः *indriyaih* : with senses, विषयान् : *vishayan* : objects, चरन् *charan* : moving (amongst), प्रसादम् *prasadam* : peace, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : But the self-controlled man free from attraction and replusion, with his senses under restraint though moving among objects, attains peace.

Commentary : The man who is able to restrain the senses and control the mind attains peace. He may be using the senses and sense-objects for the purpose of sustaining his life, but such work does not befoul the purity and peace of his mind. When the poisonous fangs are pulled out, the serpant is harmless. Similarly when attraction and repulsion *Raga* and *Dwesha* are eliminated from the mind, the senses lose their evil power, and then they are only instruments in the hands of man to do what he wants them to do, or to remain quiet in their places. Such a man can move freely in the world and no harm comes to him. When the horses are well under control, the charioteer feels free and happy because they take him easily to the destination without trouble and danger. So the senses help and not hinder the man who has obtained control over the mind.

Self-restrained, self-controlled : Self-control is the necessary condition for Self realisation. Without it spiritual life is not possible. The mind and the senses should be under one's own control, and not he under their control. The deluded self of the common man consists of turbulent senses, sensual impulses of the the mind, and animal instincts of hunger, fear, lust etc. So man acts under the power and instigation of the mind and the senses. They have mastered him, and he is their slave. Man should regain his mastery over himself. Without self-mastery no man can attain peace and happiness. He may have all the wealth and power in the world, he may have all the desires fulfilled, but peace he cannot have, because peace is the reward of self-mastery.

It cannot be purchased with wealth and power. The Lord points out the way to peace. Control of the senses, purification of mind–these two conditions should be fulfilled first, before man could experience the bliss of *Atma*

Question : *Who can attain peace ?*

Answer : He whose mind is free from attachment, whose senses are restrained, and whose mind is controlled attains peace.

65. प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठति ॥ ६५

Prasade sarvaduhkhanam hani rasyo'pajayate ।
prasannachetaso hyasu buddhih paryavatisthati ॥ 65

Meaning : प्रसादे *prasade* : in peace, अस्य *asya* : of him, सर्वदुःखानाम् *sarvadhukkanam* : of all sufferings, हानिः *hanih* : destruction, उपजायते *upajayate* : arires, happens, प्रसन्नचेतसः *prasannachetasah* : of the tranquil-minded, बुद्धिः *buddhih* : intellect, आशु *asu* : quickly, पर्यवतिष्ठति *paryavatishtati* : becomes steady, remains firmly fixed in Atma, हि *hi* : indeed.

Substance : When a man attains peace, all sorrow and suffering caused by the unbalanced mind and rebellious senses come to an end. By peace and purity the mind is soon fixed in the Self.

Commentary : Every individual is seeking for the elimination of sorrow, and the attainment of peace. How can he get them ? The path is shown here. By purity and peace of mind, both are acquired. When the mind is freed from impure impulses the aim of spiritual life is achieved. Just as in a clean mirror the reflection is perfectly clear, even so in the purified mind the Self shines forth in its own splendour and glory.

Sage Vasishta states that purity of mind arising from deep knowledge of *Atma* is *Moksha* (liberation). So all those who desire *Moksha* should keep the mind pure by constant enquiry of the Self. Two great benefits are derived from the peace of mind – (1) Elimination of all sorrow and suffering, (2) Resting of the mind firmly in *Atma*.

Of all sufferings : All sorrows and sufferings–(*adhyatmika, adhibhautika, adhidaivika*) – are removed atonce when peace is attained. What a wonderful boon of peace for man! What more does man want ? A casual look at the world and humanity would reveal the horrid restlessness, distraction and pain, both of the body and mind, which man is undergoing in this earthly life. Life is a fitful fever. Mad and delirious, man runs here and there, getting and spending, exhausting his energies, angry, distressed and subject to the innumerable shocks of life. That is the unfortunate state of man. From all these evils man is protected by the contemplation of the Self and when peace is attained, these are completely eliminated. Peace is the condition of *Moksha*. If peace does not fill the whole being of man, *Moksha* remains only in intellectual concept without real meaning or substance in it.

Mind is firmly fixed in Atma : When the mind is untroubled and peaceful the intellect is easily fixed in *Atma*. Then it is all bliss and blessedness. It is like a small river emptying itself into the ocean and becoming one with it. Even the happiness of the creator Brahma is only a drop in the ocean of the bliss of the Supreme Self. What more does a man want than to merge himself in the ocean of bliss ? So let every man who is punished with sorrow and suffering by his own evil, know the path of liberation, and strive for peace.

The man without Self-control suffers.

66. नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ ६६

Na'sti buddhir ayuktasya na chayuktasya bhavana ।
nacha'bhavayatah santi rasantasya kutah sukham । 66

Meaning : अयुक्तस्य *ayuktasya* : of the unharmonised, बुद्धिः *buddhihi* : knowledge of Self, नास्ति *nasti* : is not,

अयुक्तस्य *ayuktasya :* of the unharmonised, भावनाच *bhavanacha :* and contemplation, न *na :* not, अभावयतः *abhavayatah :* of the men without meditation, शान्तिः च *santih cha :* and peace, न *na :* not, अशान्तस्य *asantasya :* of the peaceless, सुखम् *sukham :* happiness कुतः *kutah :* whence ?

Substance: To the man not harmonised in yoga, there is no knowledge of Self; to the unharmonised, there is no meditation, to the man without meditation there is no peace and to the man without peace, whence is happiness ?

Commentary: Whence is happiness for man without peace ? Peace and happiness go together. Happiness is in the Self, and peace unlocks the flood gates of *Atmananda.* This peace is attained by constant meditation on the Self. And meditation is possible only when the mind is in a state of balance and harmony. So the first stage is harmony and balance of mind.

Such balance and harmony is the immediate result of the purified mind. It has already been pointed out that a mind free from attraction and repulsion comes to be harmonised in yoga. So without purity, there is frequent mental agitation which makes it impossible for man to meditate on *Atma.* Through purity, mental harmony is acquired, through harmony the power of meditation is acquired, and through meditation peace and through peace, happiness. The negative form of the ideas and interrogation at the end prove that the Lord wants to emphasis these ideas for the guidance of the seeker. Peace is the important step for self-realisation.

The power of the senses is once again emphasised.

67. इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥ ६७

Indriyanam hi charatam yanmano'nuvidhiyate
tadasya harati prajnam vayur navam ivambhasi 67

Meaning: चरतां इन्द्रियाणाम् *charatam indriyanam :* wandering senses, यत् *yat :* which, मनः *manah :* mind, अनुविधीयते *anuvidhiyate :* follows, तत् *tat :* that, अस्य *asya :* his, प्रज्ञाम् *prajnam :* discrimination, अम्भसि *ambhasi :* in the water, नावं *navam :* boat, वायुरिव *vayuriva :* like wind, हरति हि *harati hi :* carries away indeed.

Substance: For, the mind which follows the wandering senses carries away the discrimination, just as the gale carries away a ship upon the waters.

Commentary: The seeker should have dispassion towards sense-objects like colour, sound, form etc. If the senses are allowed freely to wander in the wilderness of the objective world, there is great danger. The mind functions through the senses which are constantly in contact with material objects. The mind by its own impurities prompts the senses to seek for enjoyment in the objective world. The mind follows the senses, and is carried away in various ways. A simile is used to illustrate the idea. The gale carries away the ship on the waters. The ship may capsize by the gale or otherwise be damaged and lost. Likewise the mind is driven away from *Atma,* and wrecked on the rocks of sensual pleasures. Even a single sense-organ is capable of pulling away the mind from the spiritual goal. If all the senses rebel, what should be the fate of that man?

Therefore the mind should be trained to think of the Self and to discriminate between the real and the unreal. If the mind is trained in this way, it can resist the temptation caused by the senses. Otherwise the mind runs after the senses. The eye sees an attractive object and the mind thinks of it. The power of discrimination is lost. When the intellect yields to the glamour of the mind, man becomes a slave to the material world. So the seeker should carefully preserve his power of discrimination and spiritual attitude, by shutting out the objective world as much as possible. We come across instances of spiritual aspirants suddenly lapsing into sense-

pleasures and ruining their chances of ultimate victory. By some amount of practice, they acquire a little steadiness of mind, and experience a little peace, but then, by their own negligence, they allow the senses to touch some material object, and the whole process of degradation starts. The mind is like a rubber ball. If the ball is let down on the top of the staircase, it rolls down step by step till it falls on the ground. The seeker therefore should not relax his vigilence even for a moment till the final goal is reached.

Question : *What is the harm if the senses and the mind wander through worldly objects ?*

Answer : They destroy the discrimination, spirituality and Godliness of the aspirant.

Therefore the man of sense-restraint alone can hope to possess steady wisdom.

68. तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६८

Tasmad yasya mahabaho nigrihitani sarvasah ।
indriyanindriyarthebhya stasya prajna pratishtita ॥ 68

Meaning: महाबाहो *mahabaho :* O Arjuna ! तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, यस्य *yasya :* whose, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani :* senses, इन्द्रियार्थेभ्यः *indriyarthebhyah :* from the sense-objects, सर्वशः *sarvasah :* completely, निगृहीतानि *nigrihitani :* restrained, तस्य *tasya :* his, प्रज्ञा *prajna :* knowledge, प्रतिष्ठिता *pratishtita :* (is) steady.

Substance : Therefore, O Arjuna ! his knowledge is steady whose senses are completely restrained from all sense-objects.

Commentary : It is not enough to have the senses half-restrained or partly controlled. Eevry effort should be made to control all the activities of the senses completely. Ceaseless vigilence and perseverence is necessary. The Lord repeatedly

states that the senses should be restrained and the mind turned towards God (*Atma*), for spiritual life. Knowledge should be steady and firm and not wavering and blickering like a lamp placed in the open. Any gust of wind may extinguish it. So are the senses. The little lamp of wisdom is put out by the power of the roving senses, and the attractions of the sense-world. The senses should be withdrawn from the sense-objects. The mind should be turned within to look into the Self. There is no use of lamenting that life is full of sorrow and suffering. The Lord is addressing such miserable mortals, and is exhorting men to take to spiritual practices and overcome sorrow and delusion.

Question : *Whose knowledge is steady ?*

Answer : The knowledge of the man who has completely controlled all the senses is firm.

The Lord explains the difference of life-experience between the yogi and the common man.

69. या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९

Ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti samyami ।
yasyam jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh ॥ 69

Meaning : सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam :* for all beings, या *ya :* which (is), निशा *nisa :* night, तस्याम् *tasyam :* in it, संयमी *samyami :* the self-controlled, जागर्ति *jagarti :* wakes, यस्याम् *yasyam :* in which, भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, जाग्रति *jagrati :* wake, सा *sa :* that, निशा *nisa :* night, पश्यतः *pasyatah :* of the seeing, मुनेः *muneh :* sage.

Substance : That which is night to all beings, in it the sage is awake; where all beings are awake, that is the night for the sage who sees (the Self).

Commentary : For the common man, the Self-state appears like night, because he can see nothing beyond the senses and the sense-world. What the common man calls day and wakefulness is simply the functioning of the senses

in the material world. But it is not so for the yogi who is one with the light of *Atma*. For him, the senses and the sense-world are not there, but he is fully wakeful in his experience of the Self. So what is night for the common man, is real wakefulness for the self-controlled. Similarly being awake only in the infinite light of *Atma*, seeing nothing of the objective world, the yogi finds night in the day when all beings are awake to the diversity of the objective world.

For the Yogi who sees the Self, the objective world does not exist, and so it is night. For the common man who sees the world, the Self does not appear and so it is night for him.

So the experiences of the sage and the common man are at the opposite poles. The man of knowledge knows that the objective world is like a dream, appearing to exist, but really non-existent. He is therefore utterly indifferent to the avocations of worldly life from day to day. He has developed intense dispassion and so the sense-world has no meaning for him. He does not recognise its existence. So sense-world is all night and sleep for him. But for the ignorant the objective world is the only reality. To them, this is all day and wakefulness.

Self-Controlled : The aspirant who has perfected self-restraint is mentioned here as the one capable of perceiving the Self, without the distractions of the sense-world.

The sage who realises the Self: There may be many meditating on the Self, but only a few could have direct vision. It is made quite clear that direct experience of Brahman is the goal of all spiritual *sadhana* and the *Muni* obtains it by long and continuous absorption in the Reality. But the total rejection of the sense-world can only open the vision of the Supreme. Again and again, the Lord reiterates the need for self-restraint and self-control.

Question : *What is the difference between the Self-Controlled and the common man ?*

Answer : The common man lives and moves in the material world. The sage leaves behind the objective world and enters the subtle plane of the spirit and attains direct vision of the Truth.

In the following two verses, The Lord explains who could attain peace.

70. आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ ७०

Apuryamanam achalapratistham
samudram apah pravisanti yadvat ।
tadvat kama yam pravisanti sarve
sa santim apnoti na kamakami ॥ 70

Meaning : आपूर्यमानम् *apuryamanam* : filled from all sides, अचलप्रतिष्ठम् *achalapratishtham* : based in stillness, समुद्रम् *samudram* : ocean, आपः *apah* : waters, यद्वत् *yadvat* : as, प्रविशन्ति *pravisanti* : enter, तद्वत् *tadvat* : so, सर्वे *sarve* : all, कामाः *kamah* : desires, यम् *yam* : whom, प्रविशन्ति *prvavisanti* : enter, सः *sah* : he, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, आप्नोति *apnoti* : attains, कामकामी *kamakami* : the desirer of desires, न *na* : not.

Substance : As the ocean is filled with water flowing into it from all sides, and remains immovable, so the man into whom all desires flow, but is not a bit affected attains peace and not the man who craves the desires.

Commentary : The man who is moved by desires and pleasures cannot attain peace. He alone attains peace who has conquered all desires.

The man of steady wisdom, the *sthitaprajna* is compared to the ocean. Though the waters of the ocean are drawn up by the sun in the form of clouds, it is not reduced in any way. So also, though rains and floods join the ocean, it does not expand. It remains the same, immovable. In the same way, the sage of steady wisdom remains unmoved, when all desires

flow into him without producing any reactions of the mind or the body. All the enjoyments of the sense-world may come to him, but they are all absorbed in the blissfull experience of the Self. He does not recognise them as anything other than the bliss of Self-realisation. He may be put in a palace surrounded by all earthly pleasures. And yet he is indifferent to them. He knows only one Reality one happiness, in which everything is dissolved as all the waters are absorbed by the ocean. Similarly the sage may be placed in the most painful circumstances and yet he knows only one Reality and one happiness (*Ananda*). The pain also merges into the same reality and disappears.

The *Jnani* has dispassion towards the pleasures of the material world. If there is the least trace of desire for this or that, he is still not a sage. The real *Jnani* is like the ocean, vast, and full. He is filled with the bliss of *Brahmananda.* And just as the ocean is full and immovable, the *Jnani* is firm, immovable, and changeless, in all the states and conditions of life.

Small wells, tanks, and reservoirs are not like the ocean. When floods come, they overflow, cut the bund and cause damage. When there is drought, they dry up and look like empty pits They change. But the ocean is changeless. The ignorant man is upset one way or the other by the pleasures and sufferings of life. They are distracted both when pleasures come, and when suffering falls to their lot.

The ocean does not seek for augmenting its water from rains and rivers. They come and the ocean simply absorbs them. That is all. The *Jnani* also does not seek for anything. When Providence brings pleasures, he absorbs them into his own *Brahmananda,* and remains unaffected.

So those who desire for peace should constantly meditate on the last line of this verse. They should root out all the secret desires from their heart and fix their mind in the one Reality and the one Bliss that exists eveywhere. The seeker should be desireless (*akamakami*).

Question : *Who enjoys peace ?*

Answer : The desireless man who like the ocean, absorbs into himself all the pleasures and enjoyments attains peace.

71. विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ७१

Vihaya kaman yah sarvan pumamscharati nihsprihah ।
nirmamo nirahamkarah sa santim adhigacchati ॥ 71

Meaning : यः पुमान् *yah puman* : that man, सर्वान् *sarvan* : all, कामान् *kaman* : desires, विहाय *vihaya* : leaving : निःस्पृहः *nisprihah* : having no relish for them, निर्ममः *nirmamah* : without feeling of I and mine, निरहंकारः *nirahankarah* : egoless, चरति *charata* : moves about, सः *sah* : he, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : The man who abandoning all desires lives without any relish for them, and without any feeling of I and mine, attains peace.

Commentary : Arjuna asked the Lord four questions about the *Sthitaprajna* – (1) What are his qualities ? (2) What does he speak ? (3) How does he move ? (4) How does he act ?

From the 55 th verse till the end of the discourse, all the qualities mentioned constitute the general character of the sage of steady wisdom.

In this verse again the Lord speaks of the man who attains peace. Four important conditions are to be fulfilled before man could experi.nce the supreme peace of the Self.

(1) All desires should be given up completely.
(2) There should not be any taste or relish for them.
(3) The feeling of *me* and *mine* should be given up.
(4) The ego-centre attitude should be dropped.

The Lord repeats at the end what He has affirmed at the beginning of his estimate of the *sthitaprajna*. The word all (*Sarvam*) is repeated emphatically many times, to show that *all* desires should be given up without any exception. Even if there is a single left in the mind, it grows and grows and binds man in *samsara*.

It is not enough to give up desires and sense pleasures externally. The seeker should not think of them even, nor entertain any longing for them.

The ego-centric attitude which is the root cause of bondage should be eliminated by knowledge of the real Self. It is the ego which attaches itself to the body and forges all the bonds of friends, relations, enemies and so on. It is because of the ego-centric attitude that Arjuna was overpowered by delusion and sorrow at the thought of killing his people *svajanam* in battle. When the man does not identify himself with the body, all other attachments arising from the body are removed completely. When the body is not his, how can he have any attachment for things outside the body? Knowledge of the real Self clears away all doubts and perplexities, and then peace is attained.

We note once again that the general term anybody (*yah*) is used here, implying that wisdom is not the monopoly of persons belonging to any particular caste or creed. Whoever follows the Lord and the way shown by him will attain peace.

Question : *Who can attain peace ?*

Answer : The man who has given up all desires, who has no longing for enjoyments, who has abandoned the idea of *mine* and who has transcended the ego, attains peace.

In conclusion the Lord declares that Brahmi state once acquired removes all delusion for ever.

72. एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वाऽस्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ ७२

72. *Esha brahmisthitih partha*
nai'nam prapya vimuhyati ।
sthitva'syamantakale'pi
brahma nirvana mricchati ॥ 72

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna, एषा *esha* : this, ब्राह्मीस्थितिः *brahmi sthitih* : (is) state of Brahman, एनाम् *enam* : this, प्राप्य *prapya* : having obtained, नविमुह्यति *navimuhyati* : is not deluded, अन्तकालेऽपि *antakale'pi* : even at the end of life, अस्याम् *asyam* : in this, स्थित्वा *sthitva* : being established, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : one-ness with Brahman (i.e.) Moksha, ऋच्छति *ricchati* : attains.

Substance : Having obtained this Brahmi state man is not deluded. Being established in this even at the end of life man attains oneness with Brahman (*Moksha*).

Commentary : The final goal of Vedanta is set forth here. All the practices—restraint of the senses, mind-control, abandoning all ego-centric thoughts and feelings, having no consciousness of me and mine lead to the ultimate union of the individual being with the Supreme Self. The individual who thought of himself, as a separate entity now realises that he is no other than the Self, which is the Reality in himself and in all beings. This is the Brahmi-state. By constant meditation on the Self, the individual being becomes that, even as the worm becomes the bee by contemplating on it deeply and continuously. When the Brahmi-state is reached, all delusions cease, all doubts are cleared. The absolute Truth is realised.

The Lord declares that the sage who has attained this state, will not be subject to delusion at any time thereafter.

Even at the end of life : It does not mean that man attains the Brahmi-state in the last moments of his life. It means that he retains the supreme state even at the end of life. Such a man attains *Moksha*, the highest state of freedom

and bliss. It is not possible to reach that state in the last moments of life, if one had not struggled for it through a whole life-time by performing *sadhana*. Even in old age one should retain the memory of the supreme realisation. What is acquired by long practice should be kept fresh in the mind, even in the last moments of one's life. The body and mind are weak in old age. So the practice (*sadhana*) should begin when one is young and strong. The bad tendencies (*samskaras*) should be gradually eliminated. The mind should be purified and turned towards the Self, and constant meditation on the Self will lead to *samadhi*, and in *samadhi* man realises his oneness with Brahman.

The Lord declares that He should be remembered at all times, not simply at the time of death. Moreover what one thinks of and practises during a whole life-time would be in the mind at the last moments. So continuous practice is necessary. No one can say when the end may come. So uninterrupted *sadhana* should go on from day to day, even from childhood. Then it does not matter when the end comes. He will be ready to face it because he knows the Truth.

So, instead of wasting time in foolish pursuits and vain endeavours, let the seeker start the *sadhana* at once and realise the Truth.

Question : *What is the Brahmi-state ?*

Answer : Oneness with Bahman, acquired through conquest of desires, Self-control, meditation on *Atma*, is the Brahmi state.

Question : *When should a man posses this state ?*

Answer : At all times, including the moments of death, man should retain this experience.

Question : *What will it lead to ?*

Answer : The individual being attains *Moksha*, the state of supreme freedom and bliss.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे साङ्ख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam
yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade samkhya yogo
nama dvitiyo'dhyayah ॥

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the
science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga,
the dialogue between Sri Krishna and
Arjuna, ends the Second Discourse,
entitled-Samkhya Yoga
(The yoga of knowledge)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ तृतीयोऽध्यायः

Atha Tritiyodhyayah

THE THIRD DISCOURSE

कर्म योगः

KARMA YOGA

THE YOGA OF ACTION

The title of the Discourse :

No one can live without doing some work or other. All men should do their prescribed duties without any feeling of personal attachment. They should perform them in a spirit of dedication to the Lord. Why man should carry out his duties in the world? What harm would result from their non-performance? What good would be gained by doing them? How work binds man, how it leads man to liberation–these problems are prescribed and solved in this Discourse, and so it is entitled Karma Yoga.

Main Points of the Discourse :

1) Proving that detached performance of prescribed duties is the best way of life. (1-8)
2) Showing that work done without desire to enjoy the fruits is Yoga, and the need for *yajna* in the world. (9-16)
3) Stating that the sage of knowledge and God work for the good of humanity and the creation. (17-24)

4) Differentiating the wise and the ignorant, and exhorting men to work free from attachments and revulsion. (25-35)
5) Describing *Kama* and *Krodha*, and pointing out the way to conquer them. (36-48)

The connection between this Discourse and the previous one :

In the Sankhya Yoga, the Lord taught Arjuna the highest spiritual Truth. In the middle of the discourse reference is made to Nishkama Karma. At the end, the characteristic features of the Sthitaprajna are described. Once again, at the end, the highest aspect of knowledge, perfect control of the body, senses and mind, the highest state of spiritual illumination and the experience of the Supreme Brahman–these are described with wonderful force. Hearing it, Arjuna naturally thought that spiritual wisdom was the last goal of man, and asks the Lord why he is placing him in the field of action in the midst of a dreadful battle. This question is answered in the present Discourse.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Jyayasi chetkarmanaste mata buddhir janardana ।
tatkim karmani ghore mam niyojayasi kesava ॥ 1

अर्जुन उवाच *Arjuna uvacha :* Arjuna said :

Meaning : जनार्दन *janardana* : O Krishna ! बुद्धिः *buddih* : knowledge, कर्मणः *karmanah* : to action, ज्यायसी *jayasi* : superior, ते *te* : your, मताचेत् *mata chet* : belief (is), तत् *tat* : then, केशव *kesva* : O Krishna ! घोरे *ghore* : in dreadful, कर्मणि *karmani* : action (battle), माम् *mam* : me, नियोजयसि ***niyojayasi*** : you engage, किम् *kim* : why.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna ! If your belief is that knowledge is superior to action, then why do you engage me in this dreadful act of battle ?

Commentary : In verses 49, 50, 51 of Samkhya Yoga, the Lord declared the superiority of knowledge to action. The doubt might have crept into Arjuna's mind even then. But the Lord proceeded to speak of *samadhi*, and the ultimate union of the individual with *Paramatma*, and hence Arjuna simply put the question about the characteristics of the *sthitaprajna*. The lord answered the question and explained the highest *Brahmi Sthiti* and the Samkhya Yoga comes to an end with it. Now Arjuna wanted to have the doubt cleared by the Lord, how he should reconcile the two paths of knowledge (*Jnana* and work (*Karma*). So he presents his doubt in the first two verses.

2. व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ २

Vyamisrene'va vakyena buddhim mohayasi'va me ।
tadekam vada nischitya yena sreyo'ham apnuyam ॥ 2

Meaning : व्यामिश्रेण *vyamisrena :* perplexing, एव *iva :* as it were, वाक्येन *vakyena :* by expression, मे *me :* my, बुद्धिम् *buddhim :* intellect, मोहयसीव *mohayasiva :* confuse as it were, अहम् *aham :* I, येन *yena :* by which, श्रेयः *sreyah :* bliss, आप्नुयाम् *apnuyam :* may attain, तदेकम् *tadekam :* that one (either knowledge or action), निश्चित्य *nischitya :* for certain, वद *vada :* tell.

Substance : You confuse my intellect as it were with speech which appears paradoxical. Tell me decisively that one path by which I may attain the highest.

Commentary : The word *iva* (as it were) is used twice in this verse. It means that Arjuna has full faith in the Lord, that he is not actually puzzling the intellect, but that, out of

his own ignorance, it appears to him that the two doctrines of *Jnana* and *Karma* are contradictory to each other. Hence with child-like innocence, Arjuna wants to know for certain what course would be best for him to attain the highest.

In answer to Arjuna's questions, the Lord states the two paths leading to liberation.

श्री भगवानुवाच

3. लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Loke'smin dvividha nistha pura prokta maya'nagha ।
jnanayogena samkhyanam karmayogena yoginam ॥ 3

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha :* The Blessed Lord said.

Meaning : अनघ *anagha :* O Sinless Arjuna ! पुरा *pura :* formerly, लोकेऽस्मिन् *loke'smin :* in this world, मया *maya :* by me, सांख्यानाम् *samkhyanam :* of the samkhyas, ज्ञानयोगेन *jnanayogena :* by the path of knowledge, योगिनाम् *yoginam :* of the yogins, कर्मयोगेन *karma yogina :* by the path of action, द्विविधा *dvividha :* two-fold, निष्ठा *nishta :* path, प्रोक्ता *prokta :* spoken.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O sinless Arjuna ! In ancient times two paths of spiritual description were spoken by me–the *Jnana yoga* for the followers of the path of knowledge, and *Karma yoga* for the followers of the path of action.

Commentary : *O Sinless :* Arjuna is free from sin. So he is fully qualified to receive the highest wisdom. When the cloth is clean, it can be dyed in any colour. The Lord knew the purity of Arjuna's mind, and therefore he chose to teach him *Brahma Vidya*.

Each individual, according to his ingrained disposition, seeks the path which is congenial to his nature. Some are born with an intellectual frame of mind and the path for him is that of enquiring into the Self (*Jnanayoga*). For these the Lord taught the path of knowledge. Others are born with a practical temperment, and they love action. For them, the Lord pointed out another path–*karma yoga*. Each man is perfectly free to choose his own path. There is no compulsion. Any course of imposed discipline will go against nature, and will not yield the desired result. There may be many roads leading to the same destination. There may be different routes to climb up a peak. Any route will ultimately take the people to the top of the mountain. So the Lord here declares that man may follow any path which is agreeable to his character and reach the goal. Though in the Gita several yogas are stated, all of them can be brought under these two main divisions–*Jnana Yoga* and *Karma Yoga*.

The Lord says that he taught the two-fold path in times immemorial. So he is beyond time and place. He is *Paramatma*, appearing in the form of Sri Krishna and teaching the highest wisdom to humanity.

Question : *What are the two paths of spiritual discipline ?*

Answer : Sankhya yoga, the path of knowledge and Karma yoga, the path of work, are the two types of discipline taught by the Lord.

Liberation cannot be attained by merely giving up work.

4. न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४

Na karmanam anarambhan naiskarmyam purusho'snute ।
na cha sannyasanat eva siddhim samadhigacchati ॥ 4

Meaning : पुरुषः *purushah :* man, कर्मणाम् *karmanam :* of action, अनारम्भात् *anarambhah :* from non-performance, नैष्कर्म्यम् *naishkarmyam :* the actionless state of Brahman, न अश्नुते *na asnute :* does not reach, सन्न्यसनादेव *sannyasanat eva :* from renunciation only, सिद्धिम् *siddhim :* perfection, नच समधिगच्छति *nacha samadhigacchati :* and (man) does not attain.

Substance : Man does not reach the actionless state of Brahman by mere non-performance of work, nor does he attain perfection by renunciation only.

Commentary : The first line of the verse refers to *Karma Yoga* and the second line to *Jnana Yoga*.

By simply declining to do the prescribed duties, man cannot reach the still, actionless state of Brahman. In the same way, by merely adopting the external formalities of *Sanyasa*, no man can attain liberation. What is needed for perfection is purity of mind.

Unless work is done without attachment there cannot be purity of mind; without purity knowledge of *Atma* will not dawn; without knowledge, there is no *Moksha* (liberation). Therefore the Lord here declares that there is no *Moksha* for the man who does not work. In the beginning all seekers should undertake some form of work and learn to do it without hankering after the fruits there of, and in the final stages they attain experience of Self. No one gains *Moksha* by merely giving up work. If that is so, the idlers would be the greatest philosophers of the world ! On the other hand, such men fall deeper into the mire of *tamas*, and it would take many births for them to lift themselves up from the bog of inaction. Many ignorant people imagine that when they give up work, they simply attain *Moksha*, and on account of this misconception, lose worldly prosperity as much as spiritual progress. They are neither *Karmayogis* or *Jnanayogis*. They are neither useful to the world nor to themselves, nor can they move an inch towards perfection. It is absolutely necessary to understand the position correctly.

The path of spiritual progress is slow and gradual. Sudden illumination never occurs except in very rare cases.

Every one should pass from *tamas* to *rajas*, from *rajas* to *sattva*, and from *sattva* to *pure sattva*, when Self is realised. The first step is the performance of prescribed duties by so disciplining the body and mind that they take to action easily and naturally. Therefore the Lord here declares that the final experience of Brahman is not an easily attainable objective by merely giving up one's duties. Work should be done, without attachment. That is the trumpet call of the Lord. Moreover it is utterly useless to renounce work while all the inherent tendencies of the mind and heart are actively and powerfully functioning in their own way without any check or control. Nothing good can come from mere external renunciation of action. The spiritual aim cannot be achieved by that.

The question is not whether to work or give up work. The main issue is how to get inner purity of mind and heart, how to eradicate the evil impulses and instincts which have taken root in the depths of the human personality. Towards this end, the Lord prescribes selfless work. He exhorts all men to undertake some form of good work and do it without any motive of gain or profit, and with a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Question : *What is the way to attain Moksha ?*

Answer : *Moksha* cannot be attained either by non-performance of work or by external renunciation.

Question : *How then can Moksha be attained ?*

Answer : By purifying the mind through *nishkama karma*, Moksha can be attained.

It is physically impossible to give up work, for man is prompted to act by the qualities of nature.

5. न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ ५

Na hi kaschit kshanamapi jatu tisthatyakarmakrit ।
karyate hyavasah karma sarvah prakritijair gunaih ॥ 5

Meaning : कश्चित् *kaschit :* any one, जातु *jatu :* verily, क्षणमपि *kshanamapi :* even a moment, अकर्मकृत् *akarmakrit :* without performing action, नहि तिष्ठति *nahi tishtathi :* not remains, हि *hi :* because, प्रकृतिजैः *prakritijaih :* (by) born of prakriti (Maya), गुणैः *gunaih :* by qualities, सर्वः *sarvah :* every one, अवशः *avasah :* without his will, कर्म *karma :* action, कार्यते *karyate :* is made to do.

Substance : No one can live even for a moment without doing work. Every one without his will, is made to do work by the qualities born of *Prakriti.*

Commentary : No one can live without work even for a second. Breathing is work, eating is work, walking is work, talking is work. So it is known to all that work is a part of life itself.

Except the *Jnani,* every one else is subject to *Maya* (Prakriti). And the impulses of the mind compell all people to do some kind of work or other according to their nature. The scholar cannot live without study of books. The idler cannot live without aimless wandering. The learned and the ignorant are acting under the power of the qualities born of *Prakriti.* Each according to his nature is doing some work or other, over which he has no control. The law applies to all beings in the world. Animals and birds work according to their nature. Each has its own peculiar characteristics. Man being endowed with reason (*buddhi*) may choose the work, but what is chosen is also according to his nature. So it is true that all are prompted by *Prakriti.* Here the word *sarvah* is used with only the single exception of the *Jnani,* who has become a *Jivanmukta* by direct realisation of the Supreme, having attained the *Brahmi-sthiti* the *Jnani* transcends the *gunas,* and so he is not moved by the impulses arising from the qualities of nature. But since he has a body which is the instrument of *Prakriti,* he uses it just for maintaining life He is perfectly detached from the vehicle of action.

The ignorant people who are every minute dragged and whirled about in all directions by the forces of nature need not however be discouraged. They should first of all understand that they have become slaves to certain modes of thought and action which they have themselves created in previous births. Knowing it, they should undertake some form of discipline, and by their own effort overcome bad *karma* by good *karma*, surrender the fruits of work to the Lord, and gradually purify their mind, and become *Jeevanmuktas* in the end.

Repression of external organs, while contemplating sense-objects within, is false discipline.

6. कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ ६

Karmendriyani samyamya ya aste manasa smaran ।
Indriyarthan vimudhatma mithyacharah sa uchyate ॥ 6

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, कर्मेन्द्रियाणि *karmendriyani :* the organs of action, संयम्य *samyamya :* restraining, मनसा *manasa :* with the mind, इन्द्रियार्थान् *indriyarthan :* sense objects, स्मरन् *smaran :* contemplating, आस्ते *aste :* sits, विमूढात्मा *vimudhatma :* of deluded understanding, सः *sah :* he, मिथ्याचारः *mithyacharah :* a hypocrite, उच्यते *uchyate :* is called.

Substance : The man of deluded understanding who, restraining the organs of action, sits contemplating the sense-objects with the mind is called a hypocrite.

Commentary : This is the Lord's warning to those aspirants who renounce action before attaining complete self-mastery.

Restraining : This is not the true self-restraint of the real seeker. Some pretenders to spirituality appear outwardly pure by keeping back the instruments of action from their natural functions. Such external repression does not

lead man to higher planes of spiritual life. Hypocrites appear like *sanyasis* in their outward life while their mind and heart are defiled by low motives and sensual desires. Such pretenders are found in large numbers everywhere. They have brought disrepute to religion.

The sincere seeker is prompted by the noble aim of realising the truth of religion. Of course in the early stages of *Sadhana*, while the external organs are kept in check, the mind wanders about enjoying sense-pleasures in recollections and imaginations. But his aim is to wash the mind of all its impurities both by internal and external restraint. The pretender has no such aim. His object is merely to use religion as a means of livelihood and social prestige There is a world of difference between the real *sadhu* and the hypocrite.

Let not the seeker fall into the delusion that the battle with the evil forces is over simply by restraining the organs of action. He should restrain the mind. It is the nature of the mind to wander at random through the objective world, feeding on sensual delights. This has beome a mental habit on account of former indulgence in sense-pleasures. Slowly the habit should be changed. Perseverance is necessary. Nothing can be done in a day. Repeated effort over a long period will surely change the mental attitude.

When a seeker undertakes a spiritual practice, he should clearly understand the method and purpose of the *sadhana*. Otherwise he moves in the wrong direction. He should learn the principles and practice from experienced teachers. It is not enough to know that sense-organs should be restrained. He should understand its implications. Of what use is it to restrain the sense-organs when the mind is thinking and enjoying all the forbidden pleasures of the body ? The Lord emphatically declares that the purpose of restraining the senses is to purify the mind. Sense-control is not an end in itself. It is the means to an end, the end being purity of mind.

Of deluded understanding: The wrong practice of the hypocrite is an act of self-delusion. The sense organs and the organs of action have no power to know or experience the objects of the world. It is only when the mind is attached to the senses and the body that sensuous experience is derived. So sense-control should go hand in hand with mind control Rather mind-control comes first and sense-control in effect takes place as a natural sequence. When the mind is kept under control, there is no harm even if the body and the senses move about in the world to obtain the bare necessities of life. The next verse clarifies the position.

Question : *What is mithyachara* ?

Answer : Restraining the organs of action, and allowing the mind to wander about in the material world is *mithyachara*.

He is the best who gives up attachment in the mind and works without desire.

7. यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ ७

Yastvindriyani manasa niyamya'rabhate'rjuna ।
karmendriyaih karmayogam asaktah sa visishyate ॥ 7

Meaning: अर्जुन *Arjuna* : O Arjuna ! तु *tu* : but, यः *yah* : who, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : the senses, मनसा *manasa* : with the mind, नियम्य *niyamya* : controlling, कर्मेन्द्रियैः *karmendriyaih* : with the organs of action, कर्मयोगम् *karma-yogam* : karma yoga, असक्तः *asaktah* : without attachment, आरभते *arabhate* : commences, सः *sah* : he, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is the best.

Substance : But, O Arjuna ! he who controls the senses with the mind, and commences the discipline of *Karma yoga* by his organs of action without attachment, is the best.

Commentary : Both the organs of action and inner instruments of cognition are included in the practice of *karma yoga*. Then only the discipline is complete. It is the mind that moves the bodily organs of action and the sense-organs of perception. So the mind should be kept detached from desire and longing for material pleasures. Such a man does his prescribed work without any desire for personal enjoyment.

The senses and instruments of action should be under the control of the mind, and the mind should be under one's control. Bondage results from mental attachment to material objects, whether the body and the senses work or remain inactive. So the point is how to keep the mind free from becoming entangled in the meshes of the material world. Such freedom is its *Moksha*. So the Lord here says that, when the mind is kept free and pure, though a man moves and works in the world, he is not affected by it at all. Keeping the mind in a pure and harmonised state comes first, and the control of the body and the senses follow as a natural effect. Great men have done immortal work for the benefit of humanity by following this law.

Question : *What is Karma Yoga* ?

Answer : Control of body and senses by the mind, and doing selfless work in the world is *Karma Yoga*.

The Lord commands that work prescribed by the Sastras should be performed.

8. नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८

Niyatam kuru karmatvam karma jyayo hyakarmanah ।
sarirayatra'pi cha te na prasiddhye dakarmanah ॥ 8

Meaning : त्वम् *tvam* : you, नियतम् *niyatam* : prescribed by the Sastras, कर्म *karma* : work, कुरु *kuru* : do, अकर्मणः *akarmanah* : to inaction, कर्म *karma* : work, ज्यायोहि *jyayohi* :

is superior indeed, अकर्मणः *akarmanah* : by inaction, ते *te* : your, शरीरयात्रापिच *sarirayatrapicha* : and even maintainance of body, न प्रसिध्येत् *na prasidhyet* : would not be possible.

Substance : Doing the work prescribed by the Sastras is superior to inaction. By inaction even maintainance of the body for you would not be possible.

Commentary : *Do the work prescribed by the Sastras* : This is the Lord's direct answer to Arjuna's appeal–*tell me decisively one path* (*tadekam vada nishchitya*) (3–2).

The work prescribed by the Sastras should be performed. By it, the mind becomes purified and the Self is realised in the end. Nothing comes from inaction. Work certainly is superior to inaction. By inaction, even bodily existence is impossible. The Lord commands Arjuna to be up and active in the performance of his duty.

It is befitting the universality of the Gita to give to this word *karma* a larger interpretation than mere performance of ritual. Man is continuosly acting in various fields of personal, social, and national life. He is at work in the house, in the office or factory, in the co-operation endeavour of national projects. All this is *karma*. The Lord's observation that even physical existence becomes impossible by inaction, should be understood as a call to the nation to work and work hard for its own and unviersal benefit. The world today needs men capable of and dedicated to work. Each one in his own field has to do work and more work as much as possible for him to do.

Question : *What is superior ? Work or inaction ?*

Answer : Work is superior.

Question : *What type of work?*

Answer : Work prescribed by the Sastras.

Question : *What harm would be caused by inaction ?*

Answer : Without work, the mind cannot be purified, and self-realisation is not possible. Even physical existence becomes impossible by inaction.

The way to release oneself from the bondage of karma is pointed out.

9. यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥

Yajnarthatkarmano'nyatra
loke 'yam karmabandhanah ।
tadartham karma kaunteya
muktasangah samachara ॥ 9

Meaning : कौन्तेय *kaunteya* : O! Arjuna, यज्ञार्थात् *yajnarthat* : than for the sake of sacrifice (to please God or some mankind), कर्मणः *karmanah* : of action, अन्यत्र *anyatra* : otherwise, अयंलोकः *ayam lokah* : this world (men), कर्मबन्धनः *karmabandhavah* : bound by karma, (therefore) तदर्थम् *tadartham* : for sacrifice, कर्म *karma* : work, मुक्तसङ्गः *muktasangah* : unattached, समाचर *samachara* : do well.

Substance : O Arjuna! Works other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice (*Yajna*) binds this world. So perform work for sacrifice without attachment.

Commentary : The teacher of the Gita gives new interpretations to familiarise terms like *yajna*, *sannyasa*, *tyaga* etc. Ordinarily *yajna* means a certain form of ritual, accompanied with the sacred fire, oblations, *mantras* and *tantras* and other rites. The Lord defines the word as an 'act performed with no selfish motive for the service of humanity. Whatever may be the scope of the work, great or small, if it is done as an act of dedication to God and service to beings, it becomes a *yajna*. This is within the capacity of all men to perform and acquire merit. Generally it is a mistaken view to think that *karma* binds men to *Samsara*. And even if it is

good work, man has to be born again and again to enjoy the fruits of such *karma*. They argue that *karma* should be given up. But the Lord clears this misconception. When *karma* is done with the desire of enjoying its fruits, it binds man to the wheel of birth and death. What is done without desire and attachment cannot bind man. On the other hand, it purifies the mind and heart and leads to ultimate freedom.

Work done with attachment binds; the same work performed without attachment, liberates. Work performed as dedicated to God or as service to mankind liberates. So there is nothing evil in work as such. The evil lies in the personal motive behind it—the desire for reward and enjoyment.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to work intensely (*samachara*). But he wants his disciple to understand the principle behind work. One should understand it correctly and go into action. Otherwise he is caught in the meshes of *karma*. The law of work is thus explained here – (1) *Yajna* should be done as an act of dedication to God and as service to humanity. (2) *Yajna* should be done without any attachment for the fruits thereof. Work done in this spirit, though it is of a common quality is transformed into a great *yajna*. Work then ,becomes worthier. It purifies and liberates.

Question : *What kind of karma does not bind ?*

Answer : Work dedicated to God and humanity, and performed without desire for its fruits, does not cause bondage.

The miraculous power of Yajna is stated.

10. सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १०

Sahayajnah prajah sristva puro'vacha prajapatih ।
anena prasavisyadhvam eshavo'stvishta kamadhuk ॥ 10

Meaning : प्रजापतिः *prajapatih* : Brahma (Creator), पुरा *pura* : in the beginning, सहयज्ञाः *sahayajnah* : together with sacrifice, प्रजाः *prajah* : mankind, सृष्ट्वा *srishtva* : having created, अनेन *anena* : by this, प्रसविष्यध्वम् *prasavishyadhvam* : shall you propagate, एषः *eshah* : this (yajna), वः *vah* : to you, इष्टकामधुक् *ishtakamadhuk* : milk–cow of desires, अस्तु *astu* : let be, उवाच *uvacha* : said.

Substance : Having created mankind together with *yagna* in the beginning, Brahma (Creator) said – "By this shall you propagate; it shall be to you the milk–cow of desires, the wish–fulfilling heavenly cow *Kamadhenu*."

Commentary : The moment when mankind was created, that very moment the ways and means for their prosperity and freedom were also brought into the world. The Lord's mercy is infinite. He knew that man would plunge into all kinds of action and get himself caught in the wheel of *samsara*, and suffer pain and sorrow endlessly. So along with man, the Creator introduced into the world several types of *yajnas* which would help mankind in their journey through life to final perfection.

Yajna means an act of dedication to God or service to humanity or meditation on God the Supreme Reality.

Milk-cow of desires : The *yajna* is said to yield all the good things that man needs in his journey through life. Man needs above every thing else the removal of sorrow and the attainment of peace. They can be achieved by performing *yajna*. Therefore it is compared to the wish–fulfilling *Kamadhenu* of Heaven. Not only the spiritual welfare of mankind, but also their material prosperity is answered by the performance of *yajna*.

Question : *What did Brahma create along with mankind ?*

Answer : Yajna–good and godly works.

Question *What is its use?*

Answer : It helps the spiritual growth of man and like the *Kamadhenu*, it confers all the good things of life here and hereafter.

11. देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११

Devan bhavayata'nena te deva bhavayantu vah ।
parasparam bhavayantah sreyah param avapsyatha ॥ 11

Meaning : अनेन *anena* : with yajna, देवान् *devan* : the Gods, भावयत *bhavayata* : nourish, ते देवाः *te devah* : those gods, वः *vah* : you, भावयन्तु *bhavayantu* : nourish, परस्परम् *parasparam* : one another, भावयन्तः *bhavayantah* : nourishing, परम् *param* : the highest, श्रेयः *sreyah* : good, अवाप्स्यथ *avapsyatha* : (both men and Gods) shall attain.

Substance : Nourish the Gods with *Yajna*, and they shall nourish you, and thus nourishing one another both men and Gods you shall attain the highest good.

Commentary : It is the Supreme Lord who appears in the form of different Gods (shining ones) embodying the multifarious powers of the One, ruler of the Universe. So whom-so-ever one worships, without desiring for any material benefits, he is liberated by the mercy of the Supreme Being.

Highest good: In the world there are many things good and enjoyable, like wealth, children, popularity, prosperity etc. Of all these, the highest good, namely liberation, is attained by the worship of the Supreme Being, by the worship of the Truth which is covered up by the inscrutable power of *Maya*. Man's effort and God's grace are both necessary for liberation.

Even in the common affairs of life, the man who links himself with the Lord finds protection from dangers in the daily turmoil of life, and obtains alround prosperity. Better it is to depend on the Lord than on ordinary mortals who are subject to all the ills of life. They may help or not help according to their self-interest. In any away such contact with mortal benefactors comes to an end with death. The contact with the Lord continues forever and if man's devotion is intense enough, he is liberated even in this birth.

Question : *How can man attain highest good ?*

Answer : Man attains the highest good by desireless performance of *yajna*.

He who does not offer to the Gods the things which they have given him is indeed a thief.

12. इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२

Istan bhoganhi vo deva dasyante yajnabhavitah ।
tairdattanapradayai'bhyo yo bhunkte stena evasah ॥ 12

Meaning : यज्ञभाविताः *yajnabhavithah* : nourished by yajna, देवाः *devah* : the Shining Ones (Gods), वः *vah* : to you, इष्टान् *ishtam* : desirable, भोगान् *bhoghan* : enjoyments, दास्यन्ते हि *dasyante hi* : give indeed, तैः *taih* : by them, दत्तान् *dattan* : given, एभ्यः *ebhyah* : to them, अप्रदाय *apradaya* : without offering, यः *yah* : who, भुङ्क्ते *bhunkte* : enjoys, सः *sah* : he, स्तेनः *stenah* : thief, एव *eva* : verily.

Substance : Nourished by sacrifice, the Gods give to you desirable enjoyments. He who enjoys objects given by the Gods without offering them is verily a thief.

Commentary : When the Gods are worshipped by means of sacrifice, they confer on mankind many material blessings and prevent many material calamities He who enjoys these material things without offering them to the Gods or to fellow-

beings in the form of God, is indeed a thief, because he enjoys objects without paying the price for them. Food, water, air and other things which we use belong to God. They are not manufactured by us. What we call the discoveries and inventions of modern science are but combinations and modifications of things already created, and the utilisation of powers already present in nature. In fact, even the intelligence of man is itself the gift of God. So from first to last, in every way, and for every thing, man is indebted to God. Any one who forgets to offer Him what belongs to him only, should be regarded as a thief. Gratitude and devotion are the proper price that one should pay to enjoy the fruits of life. Offering them to God or to fellow beings is the first duty for all mankind. Otherwise people will lay themselves open to the charge of being robbers and dacoits who misappropriate what does not belong to them.

How many people follow this law? Of what avail is it to acquire name and fame, wealth and learning in the eyes of humanity, when in the eyes of God people are only thieves and robbers? Moreover, even in this earthly life, the thief is condemned and punished. If so, will there be no punishment when one robs things belonging to God? They shall of course pay the full penalty for such misappropriation. So let the seekers who desire to win the grace of God make it their duty to give something to the fellow mortals (*dana*) — a morsel of food or a cup of water to the needy every day before they enjoy the food. Let them offer their whole to God, and think that nothing belongs to them. All is offered to God in the spirit of *Brahmarpanam* or *Sarvam Sri Krishnarpanamasthu.* Thus one repays the debt of gratitude that he owes to God for the innumerable blessings which He has conferred on mankind.

Question : *What do the Gods give us ?*

Answer : Nourished by sacrifice, they give us desirable objects.

Question : *What is man's duty then ?*

Answer : He should offer them to God.

Question : *What is he who does not do so ?*

Answer : He is verily a thief.

The good arising from offering to the Gods and the evil of not doing so is stated —

13. यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ १३

Yajnasishtasinah santo muchyante sarvakilbishaih ।
bhunjate te tvagham papa ye pachanti atmakaranat ॥ 13

Meaning : यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः *yajnasishtasinah :* who eat the remnants of sacrifice, सन्तः *santah :* the righteous, सर्वकिल्बिषैः *sarvakilbhishaih :* from all sins, मुच्यन्ते *muchyante :* are freed, येतु *yetu :* those indeed, आत्मकारणात् *atmakaranat :* for their own sake, पचन्ति *pachanti :* cook (food), पापाः *papah :* (are) sinners, ते *te :* they, अघम् *agham :* sin, भुञ्जते *bhunjate :* eat.

Substance : The righteous who offer food to the Gods in sacrifice and eat the remnants, are freed from all sins. But those who cook food to satisfy their own needs, are sinners and verily eat sin.

Commentary : To cherish the Gods by offering food to them in sacrifice or to offer food to fellow mortals—the poor and hungry-and then to eat the remnants is an act of righteousness capable of destroying all sins. Not one or two sins, but all the horrible sins of man are cleansed by this act of divine or human offering. We understand from this what a powerful antidote *yajna* is to destroy all types of accumulated sins. Divine offering, compassionate relief given to suffering fellow-beings,-this is the best remedy to kill all sins. So it is said in the Esava yopanishad—

"From what you have, give something as sacrifice to the Gods or other fellow beings, and eat the remaining portion."

The selfish who cooks and eats all to satisfy his own bodily needs, is indeed eating not food, but sin! Such men accumulate sin. They eat and digest sin. and they become living embodiments of sin. So it is clear that sacrifice leads to the highest good and selfishness leads to the worst sin and suffering. Such food not offered to the Gods or fellow beings is poison, though it is the richest and the most relishing. And that food sacrificed to Gods and offered to fellow beings is nectar though it is simple boiled rice and water.

According to Vedic traditions, man commits five kinds of sin each day by the use of (1) the broomstick, (2) the waterpot, (3) the mortar and pestle, (4) the grinding stone, and (5) the oven. To eliminate these sins, the *Pancha maha-yajnas* are prescribed. They are (1) Deva Yajna, (2) Brahma Yajna, (3) Pitri Yajna, (4) Nri yajna, and (5) Bhuta Yajna.

The Vedic tradition has prescribed many types of *yajnas* to eliminate the sins committed in the course of innumerable births. The generalisation is that *all sins* would be cleared by sacrifice. All acts performed as worship of God or service to fellow-beings -not simply man but animals, birds and all lesser manifestations of life-create a sinless state of purity which enables man to realise the spiritual aim.

Question : *How does yajna help man?*

Answer : By *yajna* man is released from all sins.

Question : *What is the effect of neglecting yajna?*

Answer : The man who eats food without offering it to the Gods, verily eats sin.

Yajna by which man obtained food is the purest ritual and the Supreme Being is established in it.

14. अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४

Annad bhavanti bhutani parjanyad annasambhavah ।
yajnad bhavati parjanyo yajnah karmasamudbhavah । 14

15. कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात् सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५

Karma brahmodbhavam viddhi
brahma'ksharasamudbhavam ।
tasmat sarvagatam brahma
nityam yajne pratisthitam । 15

Meaning : अन्नात् *annat* : from food, भूतानि *bhutani* : beings, भवन्ति *bhavanti* : are born, पर्जन्यात् *parjanyat* : from rain, अन्नसम्भवः *annasambhavah* : production of food, यज्ञात् *yajnat* : from yajna, पर्जन्यः *parjanyah* : rain, भवति *bhavati* : arises, यज्ञः *yajnah* : yajna, कर्मसमुद्भवः *karmasamudbhavah* : born of action, कर्म *karma* : action, ब्रह्मोद्भवम् *brahmodbhavam* : arises from the Vedas, ब्रह्म *brahma* : Veda, अक्षरसमुद्भवम् *akshara-samudbhavam* : is born of the imperishable Paramatma, तस्मात् *tasmat* : therefore, सर्वगतम् *sarvagatam* : all-pervading, ब्रह्म *Brahma* : The Supreme Being, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, यज्ञे *yajna* : in yajna, प्रतिष्ठितम् *supratishtitam* : established, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : Beings are born of food, food is produced from rain, rain arises from yajna, yajna is born of action, action arises from Vedas, Vedas are born from the Imperishable Paramatma; therefore know that the Supreme Being is established in yajna.

Commentary : *Dharma Chakra*—

Brahma — Veda — Karma — Yajna.

From *Brahma, Veda*; from *Veda, Karma*; from *karma, yajna*-this is the order of creation. So in *yajna, Brahma* is established. *Yajna* is an act of self-purification which leads to the realisation of the Supreme (In the above *Chakra*, rain, food, and the body are included in *yajna*, and so they are not separately mentioned). *Yajna* and other righteous works

are not ordinary actions, because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in them. Let all seekers take refuge in them and cross the ocean of *samsara.*

It is said that *yajna* produces rain, and its non-performance is the cause of drought and other evils from which mankind suffers. So it is an act of human welfare and personal redemption.

Question : *Why is yajna an act of purity?*

Answer : It is pure because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in it.

16. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६

Evam pravartitam chakram na'nuvartayati'hayah ।
aghayur indriyaramo mogham partha sajivati ॥ 16

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna! यः *yah :* who, एवम् *evam :* in this manner, प्रवर्तितम् *pravartitam* : set revolving, चक्रम् *chakram :* cycle. इह *iha :* in this world, नानुवर्तयति *nanuvartayati :* does not follow, सः *sah :* he, अघायुः *aghayuh :* living in sin, इन्द्रियारामः *indriyaramah :* rejoicing in sense-pleasures, मोघम् *mogham :* in vain, जीवति *jivati :* lives.

Substance : The man who does not follow the cycle thus set revolving, is a sinner rejoicing in sense-pleasures and he lives in vain.

Commentary : It is already said that *yajna* and other selfless acts of worship and service are necessary for the purification and protection of all beings, because the Supreme Being is directly present in them. Such men who follow the *Chakra* are purified and attain *Moksha.* The rest live a useless life. They forget God; they are enslaved by earthly

pleasures; they have no purity and so their life is a waste, and they go down into the bottomless pit of *Samsara.* One way of life is pure and blessed; another way of life is sinful and useless. One is *Atmarama,* and another is *Indriyarama,* one fulfils his life, another destroys it.

To forget God is sin. Those who do not follow the *Dharma Chakra* forget God and run after the mirage of sensual pleasures. So they accumulate sin. They are described as "living in sin" (*Aghayuh*). They are men rejoicing in sensual delights. Their life is not useful either to themselves or to others. So their life is a waste. Is it proper for men to live like animals, reptiles, worms and germs? According to the Lord's command one should fulfil his life by maintaining the *Dharma Chakra.*

Question : *What is he that does not follow the Dharma Chakra?*

Answer : He is a sinner. He is a slave to sense-pleasures His life is a waste.

The sages of Self-realisation are exempt from the law of yajna.

17. यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७

Yastvatmaratireva syad atmatriptascha manavah ।
atmanyeva cha santustas tasya karyam na vidyate ॥ 17

Meaning : यः मानवः तु *yah manavah tu :* but that man who, आत्मरतिरेव *atmarathih eva :* rejoices in Atma only, आत्मतृप्तश्च *atmatriptas cha* and contented in Self, आत्मन्येव *atmanyeva :* in Self only, संतुष्टः च *Santustah cha :* happy, स्यात् *syat :* becomes, तस्य *tasya :* for him, कार्यम् *karyam :* action (the law of yajna), नविद्यते *navidyate :* is not.

Substance : But he who rejoices, who is contented, who finds happiness in *Atma* only, has no work to perform.

are not ordinary actions, because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in them. Let all seekers take refuge in them and cross the ocean of *samsara*.

It is said that *yajna* produces rain, and its non-performance is the cause of drought and other evils from which mankind suffers. So it is an act of human welfare and personal redemption.

Question : *Why is yajna an act of purity ?*

Answer : It is pure because the all-pervading Brahman is directly present in it.

16. एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६

Evam pravartitam chakram na'nuvartayati'hayah ।
aghayur indriyaramo mogham partha sajivati ॥ 16

Meaning : पार्थ *partha :* O Arjuna ! यः *yah :* who, एवम् *evam :* in this manner, प्रवर्तितम् *pravartitam* : set revolving, चक्रम् *chakram :* cycle. इह *iha :* in this world, नानुवर्तयति *nanuvartayati :* does not follow, सः *sah :* he, अघायुः *aghayuh :* living in sin, इन्द्रियारामः *indriyaramah :* rejoicing in sense-pleasures, मोघम् *mogham :* in vain, जीवति *jivati :* lives.

Substance : The man who does not follow the cycle thus set revolving, is a sinner rejoicing in sense-pleasures and he lives in vain.

Commentary : It is already said that *yajna* and other selfless acts of worship and service are necessary for the purification and protection of all beings, because the Supreme Being is directly present in them. Such men who follow the *Chakra* are purified and attain *Moksha*. The rest live a useless life. They forget God; they are enslaved by earthly

pleasures; they have no purity and so their life is a waste, and they go down into the bottomless pit of *Samsara*. One way of life is pure and blessed; another way of life is sinful and useless. One is *Atmarama*, and another is *Indriyarama*, one fulfils his life, another destroys it.

To forget God is sin. Those who do not follow the *Dharma Chakra* forget God and run after the mirage of sensual pleasures. So they accumulate sin. They are described as "living in sin" (*Aghayuh*). They are men rejoicing in sensual delights. Their life is not useful either to themselves or to others. So their life is a waste. Is it proper for men to live like animals, reptiles, worms and germs ? According to the Lord's command one should fulfil his life by maintaining the *Dharma Chakra*.

Question : *What is he that does not follow the Dharma Chakra ?*

Answer : He is a sinner. He is a slave to sense-pleasures. His life is a waste.

The sages of Self-realisation are exempt from the law of yajna.

17. यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७

Yastvatmaratireva syad atmatriptascha manavah ।
atmanyeva cha santustas tasya karyam na vidyate ॥ 17

Meaning : यः मानव तु *yah manavah tu :* but that man who, आत्मरतिरेव *atmarathih eva :* rejoices in Atma only, आत्मतृप्तश्च *atmatriptas cha* and contented in Self, आत्मन्येव *atmanyeva :* in Self only, संतुष्टः च *Santustah cha* : happy, स्यात् *syat :* becomes, तस्य *tasya :* for him, कार्यम् *karyam :* action (the law of yajna), नविद्यते *navidyate :* is not.

Substance : But he who rejoices, who is contented, who finds happiness in *Atma* only, has no work to perform.

Commentary: Except the *Paramahamsa* who has directly experienced the Supreme Self, for all others *Karma yoga* is the inevitable law. In this verse the Lord describes the liberated sage. He finds all joy in *Atma*, all satisfaction in *Atma*, all contentment in *Atma*. He does not move outside *Atma*. For him, the law of *karma* does not apply, because he has already realised the highest fruit of *karma* (i. e.) *Moksha*. So he is released from the operation of the law of *karma*. But still, if he works, he does so for the benefit of mankind. There is no harm whether he works or does not work.

Such realised sages are rare indeed. All the others must work. They should endeavour to attain the highest state by diligent performance of *yajna*. They should understand what they are, where they are, how they live, and avoid the dangerous delusion of giving up *karma* before reaching the goal. It would be as foolish to do so as to throw away the leaf before eating the food.

In modern times the attachement and distractions of the material world have assumed dangerous proportions. Man has sunk into the mire of material pleasures and is caught by them in a ready embrace from which he is not able to extricate himself. He is not able to conceive of any thing higher than food and sex. The true joy of life is lost. Man is reduced to the level of the animal creation. It would be understood by the purified intellect that joy and happiness cannot arise from dead matter. It is the greatest error to think so. True joy is actually flooding the heart of all people. What one imagines as joy coming from external objects is only the reflected Atmic happiness ever present in the heart. To know this is *Jnana*. Not to know this is *Maya*. The realised sage is perfectly contented because he knows that all the joys, delights, and pleasures of the material world are comprehended in the happiness of the Self. Knowing and realising this, he does not hanker for sense-pleasures. He does not go outside himself to seek for this or that as the ignorant man does. He is *Atmarama, Atmatripta, Atmatushta*

The general term man (*manavah*) is used to show that no one is denied the merit of Self-realisation for reasons of caste, creed, or sex.

Question : *Who is exempt from the law of karma?*

Answer : The sage of Self-realisation is free from the law of *Karma*. For him there is no work to do.

18. नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८

Nai'va tasya kritena'rtho na'kritene'ha kaschana ।
na cha'sya sarvabhuteshu kaschid arthavyapasrayah ॥ 18

Meaning: तस्य *tasya* : to the Jnani, इह *iha* : here in this world, कृतेन *kritena* : by work done, अर्थः *arthah* : use, न एव *na eva* : is indeed not, च *cha* : and, अकृतेन *akritena* : by work not done, कश्चन *kaschana* : any, न *na* : no (evil), अस्य *asya* : to him, सर्वभूतेषु *sarvabhuteshu* : in all beings, अर्थव्यपाश्रयः *arthavyapasrayah* : depending for any object, कश्चित् *kaschit* : any, न *na* : (is) not.

Substance: For him there is in this world no interest whatsoever by work done or not done. He does not depend upon any being for any object.

Commentary: It is said that the *Jivanmukta* may work or may not work. In both he has nothing to gain or lose. He is constantly rooted in the Self and is perfectly satisfied in the Self. And so, with work done or not done he has no concern whatsoever. There is nothing for him to achieve beyond the realisation of Self. So the law of *Karma Yoga* does not apply to him But we find that some of the realised sages engage themselves in work to illuminate mankind with true knowledge.

The *Jivanmukta* has nothing to seek for from any being in the world. All pleasures, delights, and joys are

in the Self and he lives and moves and has his being in the Self. So, what would he need and to which of the Devas should he offer sacrifice? Why and what for? He has arrived at the central station of all Bliss and blessedness, the source from which all joy emanates expressing itself through the mind, the senses and the body. All material benefits are included in Brahmananda according to the law—*Satey Panchasat* (Fifty is included in hundred). They have nothing to gain from any one.

It should be understood that the Lord has spoken of the *Jivanmukta.* But the ordinary seeker has still to go a long way before reaching the goal. He should perform work with detachment and devotion to God. Of course, we see that men having completed their period of service qualify themselves for pension and live a free life. This does not apply to young men who are still students and workers. They should do their work and complete the term of work, and then only they qualifiy themselves to gain pension and be free from work. Otherwise they lose their job and their livelihood. So the seeker should work with devotion and detachment, till by the grace of God, he is emancipated from the cycle of birth and death. This is the law for all common men.

The Lord commands Arjuna to work without attachment.

19. तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९

Tasmad asaktah satatam karyam karma samachara ।
asakto hyacharan karma param apnoti purushah ॥ 19

Meaning : तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, (त्वम् *tvam :* you), असक्तः *asaktah :* without attachment, सततम् *satatam :* alawys, कार्यम् *karyam :* that which should be done, कर्म *karma :* work, समाचर *samachara :* perform, असक्तः *asaktah :* without attachement, कर्म *karma :* work, आचरन् *acharan :* performing,

पूरुषः *purushah :* man, परम् *param :* the supreme, आप्नोति *apnoti :* attains.

Substance : Therefore that work which should be done, do it well always without attachment. He who performs all the prescribed duties in a detached spirit will attain the Supreme.

Commentary : Work should be done (1) without attachment and (2) as prescribed by the *Sastras.* Working in this way, action becomes a means of liberation So people should always perform *Nishkama Karma.* Detached work leads to the Supreme. Otherwise it binds and becomes the cause of *samsara.* This is the secret of *Karma yoga.*

It is here explained how *karma yoga* along with other *yogas* leads to emancipation. By *Nishkama Karma* the mind is purified and then it ascends to the highest plane. *Moksha* is purity of mind. Purity is attained by detached action.

Generally among seekers very few take to *Jnana yoga* or *Dhyana yoga.* Most people are naturally inclined to *Karma yoga* and *Bhakti yoga.* So the Lord lays special emphasis on *Karma yoga* as it is the natural path of evolution for the majority of mankind.

Question : *How should man perform work ?*

Answer : Man should act without attachment and according to the *Sastras.*

Question : *What is the result of such work ?*

Answer : *Moksha,* the highest state of liberation is attained

Janaka and others are mentioned as Karma Yogis who attained the Supreme.

20. कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २०

Karmanai'va hi samsiddhim asthita janakadayah ।
lokasamgraham eva'pi sampasyan kartumarhasi ॥ 20

Meaning: जनकादयः *Janakadayah* : King Janaka and others, कर्मणैव *karmanaiva* : by action only, संसिद्धिम् *samsiddhim* : Moksha, perfection, आस्थिता हि *asthitah hi* : indeed attained, लोकसंग्रहम् *lokasamgraham* : to show the right way to the masses, सम्पश्यन् अपि *sampasyan api* : having in view even, कर्तुम् *kartum* : act, अर्हसि *arhasi* : you should.

Substance : King Janaka and others attained perfection by action. Eevn having in view the need to show the right path to the masses, you should work.

Commentary: The principle that man attains liberation by *Nishkamakarma* is illustrated by the example of *King Janaka* and others like Asvapati, Ikshvaku, Ambarisha, Bhagiradha. They were all emperors who followed the doctrine of *Nishkama karma*, and attained the highest spiritual goal. It is an ancient way of life, and men of the greatest responsibilities in the world uuderstood the secret of the work, and practiced it in their daily life. Arjuna, a prince of the Royal family of Bharata, could do it. It is an answer to the doubt whether man could attain *Moksha* while engaged in the practical duties of the world, and whether work could lead to liberation. *Nishkama karma* purifies the mind and knowledge dawns at once. It is said in the *Yoga Vasista* that *Janaka* performed many acts of righteousness without attachment, purified his mind thereby, and by enquiry into the Self, realised the Supreme Being.

The Lord further emphasises the need for good work even from a worldly point of view. Man should work at least to serve mankind, to show them the right path, and to set an example to them. Service to humanity has indeed a very high place in religion and philosophy. Eevn to help a single individual is indeed a great work. To liberate oneself, and then to lead others to spiritual illumination is undoubtedly the highest act of service to mankind. Wealth and lands, power and position could be won and lost. But emancipation

and God-realisation is a blessing to humanity. So the Lord advises Arjuna to work, not only for self-purification but to show the path of work to mankind, and to help the masses by his personal example.

What the best of men do is followed by others.

21. यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ २१

Yad-yadacharati srestha tat-tad eve'taro janah ।
sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate ॥ 21

Meaning: श्रेष्ठः *sreshthah* : the best, यद्यत् *yadyad* : whatsoever, आचरति *acharati* : does, इतरः *itarah* : other, जनः *janah* : people, तत्तदेव *tattat eva* : that and that only, सः *sah* : he (that great man), यत् *yat* : what, प्रमाणम् *pramanam* : standard authority, कुरुते *kurutey* : sets, लोकः *lokah* : the world (man), तत् *tat* : that, अनुवर्तते *anuvartate* : follows.

Substance : What-so-ever a great man does, that other men do; whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows.

Commentary : The Lord argues the issue from a practical point of view. The actions of great men occupying a spectacular position in the world or observed by the common people. Naturally they act in the same way. What the elders do, children imitate. We see this in daily life very often that to justify ones actions, one refers to the example of great men. So, as a man acquires leadership, comes to occupy a prominent position, he should be extremely careful about what he does. It is a social responsibility for that man to live up to a high standard of moral and spiritual conduct.

Individually a man may be a *Jnani*. He may not be bound by any kind of action. But so long as he is in an embodied state, his outer life should be perfectly befitting the injunctions of the *Sastras*. Generally, when one comes across

a realised saint, he regards him as the standard of excellence, as an example and demonstration of Sastric law in actual life. Thus he has a social responsibility to show the right way to the masses by following the Sastras.

What the great people and leaders do, is copied by the common man. *Yatha raja tatha praja.* That is the popular saying of the elders. Arjuna was a prominent figure at that time. People looked up to him with admiration. So the Lord instructs him to act, to carry out the injunctions of the *Sastras,* to perform the duty prescribed by the standard in life, to fight the battle as a Kshatriya ought to do, and thus set an example of *Nishkama karma.* If he fails to stand up to the law, he would confuse and corrupt the minds of the people and they would lose both the material and spiritual realms They would become inactive, lazy and by self-delusion they may become hypocrites pretending to have *Jnana* which they do not really possess.

The principles, doctrines, and laws which the elders accept and follow form the code of conduct for the masses. So the elders of the community should make it a rule to follow the truth, to follow the *sastras,* to live nobly, to shed the light of the spirit all around, to be the beacons and guide-posts for all people in their journey through life. The Lord exhorts Arjuna to set a great example of righteous action for the people.

The Lord insists on practice and not mere talk. Any one can talk high philosophy, but very few people are able to mould their life according to the truths of spirituality. The master should live the life according to *Atma Dharma,* and show the world how such life should be lived. It is only then that the people could cultivate faith in God and the laws of the *Sastras.*

The Lord is an example of karma Yoga par excellence.

22. न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ २२

22. *Na me partha'sti kartavyam trishu lokeshu kimchana* ।
na'navaptam avaptavyam varta eva cha karmani ॥ 22

Meaning : पार्थ *partha* : O Arjuna ! मे *me* : to me, त्रिषुलोकेषु *trishulokeshu* : in the three worlds, कर्तव्यम् *kartavyam* : duty to do, किंचन *kimchana* : any, नअस्ति *na asti* : is not, अनवाप्तम् *anavaptam* : unattained, अवाप्तव्यम् *avaptavyam* : to be attained, न *na* : is not, च *cha* : and yet, कर्मणि *karmani* : in action, वर्तएव *vavta eva* : (I) am also engaged.

Substance : There is no duty for me to do in the three worlds. There is nothing unattained or to be attained for me. And yet I am also engaged in work.

Commentary : Lord Krishna is God himself. He is in all the worlds and all the worlds are in Him What then should he work for ? What is he to gain by work ? He is every thing, and yet out of compassion for humanity He incarnates Him-self again and again to maintain *Dharma* for the well-being and progress of the world. He is ceaselessly working every-where for establishing *Dharma.* He, the infinite formless *Brahman,* takes birth, comes into the world, mingles with men, teaches them, elevates them, and leads them on to freedom and bliss. If the Lord Himself is thus engaged in work, should not the common man work for his own good ? The great *Jivanmuktas* like Buddha, Shankara and a long line of sages and prophets have all done tremendous work in the world. Why ? Not for their own gain, because they have nothing to gain, but for the sake of humanity. So the seekers and aspirants should do honest and sincere work to purify themselves and attain the spiritual aim. They should not be inactive, because inaction is *tamas.* Work, work is the Lord's command. Work without attachment, performing one's duty unmindful of the results, is the law of *karma yoga.*

23. यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३

People would become unrighteous and sinful. As a result natural calamities would overtake them. I would be the author and cause of the destruction of beings. So, for the protection and welfare of all the worlds, I work. Thus the Lord proves the need for the discipline of *karma yoga* in the world.

The Lord is the cosmic intelligence who gives the law for the orderly evolution of the Universe. The plan of the Universe and its orderly functioning is due to the will of the Lord. Let us imagine what would happen to mankind on the globe if the laws of the universe are relaxed for a brief while. The whole world would crash into destruction. The pride of human intelligence appears childish when one contemplates the beneficient power that keeps the planets in their orbits. So the Lord says that if he does not work the world would perish.

The same law applies to the various duties and functions of man for the orderly maintenance and progress of humanity. The violation of this law would lead to confusion of duties and functions. The Lord expects every man to keep the law by the performance of the duties in the scheme of the world. By doing so, the community as a whole would grow and prosper. *Karma Yoga*, besides being the path of self-purification and Self-realisation, is the divine technic to secure peace and prosperity for mankind in this earthly life.

The sage works without attachment for the good of the world.

25. सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ २५

Saktah karmanyavidvamso yatha kurvanti bharata ।
kuryad vidvams tatha'saktas chikirshur lokasangraham । 25

Meaning : भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! अविद्वांसः *avidvamsah* : the ignorant, कर्मणि *karmani* : in work, सक्ताः *saktah* : attached,

यथा *yatha* : as, कुर्वन्ति *kurvanti* : act, तथा *tatha* : so, विद्वान् *vidvan* : the wise, असक्तः *asaktah* : without attachement, लोकसंग्रहम् *lokasangraham* : world-welfare, चिकीर्षुः *chikirshuh* : wishing, कुर्यात् *kuryat* : should act.

Substance : O Arjuna ! As the ignorant men work with attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment, for the welfare of the world.

Commentary : The wise and the ignorant both perform work. But there is a clear difference in attitude between the two. The wise act without attachment to the fruits of work. The ignorant act with attachment to the fruits of work. The wise are not entangled in work because they have no sense of doership. The ignorant are caught in the meshes of work by thinking that they are the doers. The wise work for the welfare of the world. The ignorant work for their own satisfaction. Work is common to both. But what a world of difference in purpose and spirit. Therefore the wise attain liberation through work and the ignorant are bound to the wheel of birth and death. Work is like a sword. For one who knows how to use it, it is a good instrument of action; for another it is a deadly weapon of self-destruction. The wise use fire for useful purposes, the ignorant get themselves burned by it. This being so, it is essential that the seeker should understand the secret of right action, its method, attitude, and aim.

The Lord says, "Do not be inactive. Use this great instrument of action (*karma*) for Self-realisation. Know how you should work and with what aim." He explains the method here. The principle of work is detachment. Work should be done without desire for personal enjoyment of the fruits therof, and unmindful of success or failure.

The common man is constantly at work, earning money with zeal and enthusiasm, building houses, purchasing lands, securing for himself and his family all the material pleasures of life. Besides, he thinks that he is the doer of all this work.

But the impersonal attitude to work is *Karma yoga*. The wise people work with equal zeal and enthusiasm, but they know that they are only the instruments of the Lord in the service of humanity. Acting in this spirit, they attain liberation.

Welfare of the world : We understand from these words that the Lord values service to humanity and other beings. It is the duty of all seekers to do what is most pleasing to the Lord. In this service, work is worship of the Lord. Any little help and service done to fellow beings is accepted by Him as an act of devotion to Him.

Bharata : The ordinary meaning for this word is one who belongs to the family of *Bharata*. It has a special meaning also. *Bha* means light, *ratah* means desirous of light. (spiritual illumination). The Lord addresses Arjuna as the seeker of divine light. He exhorts his disciple to dispel darkness by spiritual realisation.

Question : *How should a wise man work ?*

Answer : He should work in a detached spirit.

Question : *For what purpose ?*

Answer : He should work for the welfare of the world.

26. न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६

Na buddhibhedam janayed
ajnanam karmasanginam ।
joshayet sarva karmani
vidvan yuktah samacharan ॥ 26

Meaning : विद्वान् *vidvan* : the wise, कर्मसङ्गिनाम् *karma-sanginam* : attached to action, अज्ञानाम् *ajnanam* : of the ignorant, बुद्धिभेदम् *buddhibhedam* : unsettlement in the mind, न जनयेत् *na janayet* : should not produce, सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani*: all action, युक्तः *yuktah* : with yogic equanimity,

समाचरन् *samacharan* : doing, जोषयेत् *joshayet*, should make them (the ignorant) do (accordingly).

Substance : The wise man should not disturb and confuse the minds of the ignorant attached to action. By performing all actions with yogic equanimity, they should make the ignorant do accordingly.

Commentary : The Lord continues to lay stress on the duty of the wise to lead the people on the right path by personal demonstration of *karma yoga*.

The *Jnani*, though he is individually free from all action and work, should not disturb and confuse the minds of the people by abstract doctrines and theories. He should set the example by his personal life. It is only then that people could understand the secret of *karma yoga*. The world is action; life is action; people are acting in a variety of ways; the whole of nature is in ceaseless motion. The realised sage may understand the state of absolute stillness in the Supreme Being, but for all others it is a theory which they do not comprehend. Several people who are religiously-minded are doing worship with some faith in God in the hope of gaining some worldly good. The poor man worships God to attain some property. The sick man worships God to be relieved of pain and suffering. The house-holder beset with a thousand difficulties all around worships God to overcome the troubles of life. All this is *sakama karma*. But it would be foolish to tell them that what they are doing is wrong.

Such verbal teaching makes no meaning to them. It might confuse their minds and some of them may give up action, thinking that it is the right path. So the wise man should be carefull that his teaching does not run counter to the law of nature and human disposition. He should remain steadfast in the Atmic state, work without attachment, be equal-minded under all circumstances, and emanate peace and blessedness all around him. Thus the people would see and understand how they should live and work. It is not theory.

It is direct personal example that the Lord wants the wise man (*Vidvan*) to present before the people.

Any one with a little learning of religious theory can make impressive speeches from the public platform. People may admire his eloquence and flowery flow of language. But it does not enlighten the people. Any thing could be affirmed or denied by subtle argument. This leads no-where. Instead of clarifying the position, it makes confusion worse confounded. But real solid experience and practical living needs no argument to prove the efficacy of religious realisation. When we come across a realised one who emanates peace and blessedness by his very presence, all doubts come to rest and the seeker experiences a state of mind which is an affirmation of spiritual Truth. No more argumentation, speculation, theories and dogmas and doubts. They are all gone, and people would come to know what life in the Spirit is and how to live it. That is what the Lord expects the wise man to do.

Doing with equanimity : The Lord's command is that the wise man, established in the Self, should perform work with equanimity and by his detachment, purity, and peace show the way to all.

Question : *How should the wise teach the ignorant* ?

Answer : The wise should live a pure life and work in a detached way, and set an example for others to follow.

The ignorant man thinks that he is a doer of action.

27. प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ २७

Prakriteh kriyamanani gunaih karmani sarvasah ।
ahamkara vimudhatma karta'ham iti manyate ॥ 27

Meaning : प्रकृतेः *prakriteh* : of nature, गुणैः *gunaih* : by the qualities, सर्वशः *sarvasah* : in all cases, क्रियमाणानि *kriyamanani* : are performed, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions,

अहंकारविमूढात्मा *ahankaravimudhatma* : one whose mind is deluded by egoism, अहम् *aham* : I, कर्ता *karta* : doer, इति *iti* : thus, मन्यते *manyate* : thinks.

Substance : By the qualities of nature actions are performed in all cases, but one whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks "I am the doer".

Commentary : The Lord explains how action takes place. Action takes place by the power of the qualities of nature. Those qualities are – *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. They are called the three *Gunas*. These qualities of nature are modified into the four elements – *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *ahamkara*, the five subtle elements, the five organs of action, the five organs of perception, and the five objects of the senses. Thus the human organism and the universe around are the product of Nature. All actions wherever and in whatever manner they take place are actually done by the power of the three *gunas*. *Atma* remains as the eternal uncontaminated witness. The real man is *Atma*. It is the witness of the body, the internal and external organs and the modifications of the mind. In truth, the real man is not the doer. All the actions that man apparently performs with his physical and subtle organs is the work of Nature, and not of the man himself in his real Being. But the deluded man having identified himself with the body thinks "I am the doer," and so thinking he burdens himself with the responsibility for all of them. Consequently he has to pass through several births and suffer endless pain and sorrow.

This is exactly the difference between the wise and the ignorant. The ignorant man imagines himself to be the body and thinks that he is the doer, enjoyer of all actions and the fruits thereof. The wise man separates himself from the vehicle of the body and knows that he is the Self, that he is not the doer nor is he subject to the binding power of his actions.

Joy and sorrow depend upon the idea of doership. If you think you are the body, you have to bear pain and grief and all

the innumerable ills of life. If you think you are the **Self**, you are at the source of all bliss. So let the seeker discriminate between the Self and the non-Self, and know his real nature. Then all that he does is sublimated into the Self and he remains unaffected.

The secret of *Karma Yoga* is to understand the law how actions are performed and with what power they are performed. The Lord makes it clear that the cause of action is Nature functioning through the three *gunas*.

One whose mind is deluded by egoism : The ignorant man is deluded by his ego and considers that he is doing this and that and all the thousand actions of bodily life. Identification with the body "*Dehatma Buddhi*" is the root cause of delusion. Such a man is called *Vimudhatma*. The wise man knows that he is the blissful and blessed Brahman.

Question : *How are actions performed ?*

Answer : They are performed by the three *gunas* born of nature.

Question *What does the ignorant man think ?*

Answer : He identifies himself with the *gunas* and thinks that he is the doer.

Question : *What is the effect ?*

Answer : He is bound by the wheel of birth and death. So man should know that he is the blissful Self and not the body.

28. तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ २८

Tattvavittu mahabaho gunakarama vibhagayoh ।
guna guneshu vartanta iti matvana sajjate ॥ 28

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho :* O mighty-armed Arjuna! गुणकर्मविभागयोः *gunakarmavibhagayoh :* of the divisions of the qualities and functions, तत्त्ववित् तु *tattvavit tu :* but the knower of truth, गुणाः *gunah :* qualities, in the form of

senses, गुणेषु *guneshu :* in the qualities, in the form of sense-objects, वर्तन्ते *vartante :* move, इति *iti :* thus, मत्वा *matva :* knowing, नसज्जते *na sajjate :* is not attached.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna ! But the knower of Truth understands the divisions of qualities and functions. He knows that the qualities in the form of senses function amidst the objects of the senses, and he, as the Supreme Self, is not affected by them. Thus knowing, he remains unattached.

Commentary : In this verse the Lord explains how the knower of Truth understands man's actions in the world.

In the human body and the universe around, the Self and the non-Self, the *Drik* and *Drisya*, are intermingled. They should be separated. He who knows how to separate them is the knower of Truth.

As the holy grass is separated from the blades, as grain is separated from the chaff, the Self should be separated from the non-Self, and the spirit should be separated from matter. Having thus separated the two by the power of his discriminative understanding, the man of knowledge looks upon all modifications in himself and the universe as only the functions of nature with which he is not concerned. So he remains completely detached from his own senses and mind and the world around him. He is uncontaminated by any thing physical and material. He is like the water-drop on the lotus-leaf.

How can the self-realised man have any attraction for the world which is insentient and unreal as a dream? As churned butter will not mix with butter-milk but floats on it, so also the knower of truth, who lives in the Self, is not burdened with the tremendous weight of the objective world. He has thus no concern at all with the pleasures and pains caused and suffered by Nature. Detachment from the modifications of Nature is emancipation. Patanjali says–

"The intermingling of the seer and the seen should be given up." The ignorant man who has not purified his

discriminative understanding is plunged in *'Samsara,'* because he thinks that he is the body, that he is undergoing all the changes of the body, mind and senses, and that he is acting and reacting. So the seeker should gradually develop his contact with *Atma*, leaving off his former attachment for the body.

Question : *How does the knower of Truth act?*

Answer : He knows that he is the Self, and considers that all changes, functions and actions, are merely the qualities of Nature acting in the sense-objects. So he remains unattached.

The Lord once again emphasises the idea expressed in the twenty sixth verse.

29. प्रकृतेर्गुणसंमूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान्कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ २९

Prakriter guna summudhah sajjante guna karmasu ।
tan akrisnavido mandan kritsnavin na vichalayet ॥ 29

Meaning : प्रकृतेः *prakriteh :* of nature, गुणसम्मूढाः *guna-sammudhah :* persons deluded by the gunas, गुणकर्मसु *gunakarmsu :* in the functions of the qualities, सज्जन्ते *sajjante :* are attached, अकृत्स्नविदः *akritsnavidah :* of imperfect under–standing, मन्दान् *mandan :* the dull–witted, तान् *tan :* them, कृत्स्नवित् *kristnavit :* man of perfect knowledge, न विचालयेत् *na vichalayet :* should not unsettle, confuse.

Substance : The man of knowledge should not confuse the mind of those men of imperfect understanding who, deluded by the *Gunas* of Nature, are attached to action in the material world.

Commentary : In the twenty sixth verse of this Discourse, the Lord warned the man of knowledge not to confuse the mind of the ignorant by theoritical speculations, but to show the right way by acting in the right spirit. The same idea is repeated here. The ignorant who form the majority are attached to the body, and consider the qualities of Nature as their own. Spontaneously they think that they are working and acting with the definite object of enjoyment of the fruits of work. Such people should not be confused by theorising about the actionlessness of Brahman, which they cannot easily understand. So the wise man (*Vidvan, tatvavit*) should show the way by himself acting without attachment, and acting always on the highest principles of righteousness. The wise have to shoulder a tremendous responsibility. His life should confirm to the pattern enjoined by the Sastras, though he is himself beyond all laws, rules and regulations.

Of imperfect understanding : Those who are attached to the body, mind and senses, are men of imperfect knowledge. Worldly wisdom, knowledge of Sastras, learning, capacity to interpret the scripture, oratorical powers – all these and more do not qualify a man to be entitled a man of knowledge, if he identifies himself with them. This identity with the body should be given up and union with the Self should be established.

Man of perfect knowledge : Perfection of knowledge consists in realising the Self, knowing which man knows every–thing.

The sages of yore directed their enquiring not so much to the objective world outside but to discovering in themselves the secret of their being. They discovered the all–pervading *Atma*, and were satisfied because they realised that the whole universe is *Atma* and nothing else is the material and efficient cause of all that exists. They have thus become free from the delusion of the limited ego. They have become the possessors of perfect knowledge, bliss and blessedness. This should be the aim and goal of every seeker who is eager to know the Truth in the midst of the thousand and one ills and shocks of mortal life. This is the only way to peace.

Question : *What are those who are attached to action?*

Answer : They are dull-witted men of improper knowledge.

Question : *How should the enlightened man teach them?*

Answer : He should not confuse them by giving up action but set a personal example of righteous action free from attachment.

The Lord declares the law of knowledge.

30. मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशी निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३०

Mayi sarvani karmani samnyasya'dhyatmachetasa ।
nirasir nirmamo bhutva yudhyasva vigatajvarah । 30

Meaning : सर्वाणि *sarvani* : all, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, मयि *mayi* : in me, अध्यात्मचेतसा *adhyatmachetasa* : with mind established in Self, संन्यस्य *samnyasya* : renouncing (surrendering), निराशीः *nirasih* : without personal interest, निर्ममः *nirmamah* : free from egoism, भूत्वा *bhutva* : having become, विगतज्वरः *vigatajvarah* : without passion, युध्यस्व *yudhyasva* : (you) fight.

Substance : Renouncing all actions in Me with the mind fixed in Self, free from hope and egoism, fight without mental agitation.

Commentary : Most people's minds are filled with worldly knowledge and objective considerations. Such troubled minds cannot reflect the light of *paramatma*. It is not a spiritual mind. It is the gross mind capable of apprehending only material things. The aspirant should cultivate a spiritualised mind, illumined by knowledge and devoted to the Lord. Such is the purified mind capable of apprehending the subtle Reality underlying all matter. With the mind thus spiritualised, man should surrender all actions and their fruits to God.

All actions without exception should be surrendered. That is the Lord's command.

Free from desire and egoism : Desire and egoism (personal selfishness) should be given up. Man should understand that there is only one Reality. God (*Atma*) in the universe. Knowing this man cannot have any attachment of *I* and *Mine* to anything in the world. He knows that the world is only a reflection and dreamlike projection of the mind, which is subject to change, growth and decay. Thus freeing himself from the burden of material things, man should surrender to the Lord and carry out the duties of life in a detached manner. Since Arjuna is a Kshatriya the Lord's injunction to him is 'fight'. It means that every individual, according to his position in the social structure should execute his duty prescribed by custom and tradition in a spirit of dedication to the Lord–the Supreme Being.

Without passion : "Fight, free from passion" – that is again the Lord's command. The fever of life is of two kinds. One affects the body, another attacks the mind. The first could be cured by medicine. But the internal fever of the mind, being more subtle, requires spiritual cure. Every man runs to a Doctor at the slightest touch of physical ill-health, but is he taking the same care of the mind and its fever? No. The fire and passion expressing itself in anger and hatred, which consume the internal man, can be cured and extinguished only by spiritual knowledge. To divert to God, to surrender the fruits of work to God, to give up all foolish desires, to have no feeling of I and Mine–these are steps to be taken by the seeker. These four aspects of spiritual discipline constitute the most powerful cure for life's fitful fever.

It should be understood that the Lord insists on action and surrender. The terms 'fight' (*Yudhyasva*) and renouncing (*Samnyasya*) may apper apparently contrary, but it is not really so. If a wood-cutter or soldier or teacher or politician should realise the Truth, he should not for that reason change

himself or something else in the social structure. He would still be a wood-cutter or a teacher etc. and would be performing all the duties that belong to his profession. Only he knows that it is not the same person who is doing the work. The Kshatriya continues to fight the enemy and defend his country, but he knows that he is not the same person who is doing the work. Thus the concept of Hinduism is not a negation of action, but a proper understanding of the feeling of action which enables the actor to act without passion, without the elation of hope or the frustration of failure. Every man should surrender everything to the Lord and carry on the duties of life cheerfully and with courage.

Question : *What is the highest good for man ?*

Answer : Surrendering to the Lord, and acting without desire is the highest good.

Karma yoga releases man from the bondage of action.

31. ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१

Ye me matam idam nityam anutisthanti manavah ।
sraddhavanto'nasuyanto muchyante te'pi karmabhih ॥

Meaning : ये मानवाः *ye manvah* : those men who, मे *me* : my, इदम् मतम् *idammatam* : this teaching, श्रद्धावन्तः *sradhavantah* : full of faith, अनसूयन्तः *anasuyantah* : not cavilling, नित्यम् *nityam* : always, अनुतिष्ठन्ति *anutishtanti* : practise, ते अपि *te api* : they also, कर्मभिः *karmabhih* : from action, मुच्यन्ते *muchyante* : are freed.

Substance : Those men who, with faith and free from ill-will, practise this my teaching, are also freed from the bondage of action.

Commentary : It is said that men cut the bonds of action by detached and selfless action. From this we understand

that work performed in the true spirit frees man from the bondage of *karma*. The *Karmayogi* like the *Jnanayogi* attains emancipation by following the law of *Nishkama karma*. The goal of the two paths of *yoga* are the same though the methods are different.

Always. The principle of selfless action should be applied to every work that man does, and always. Man is acting every moment of his life. So the teaching of the Lord should be remembered and practised at any moment of life. There is no time set apart for the practice, as the novices set apart a time for prayer and meditation. *Karma yoga* thus comes into one's life as a natural law which yields the highest fruit.

Two important virtues are to be cultivated during the period of *sadhana*–firstly faith, and secondly freedom from ill-will. Faith in the teaching of the Lord is the first step. The degree of faith in God determines the measure of achievement. The deeper the faith the greater is the benefit. And next, ill-will is like the canker worm. It eats up man's strength and power. In the field of spirituality it is a hostile force. All the other virtues which the aspirant may acquire after long struggle would be set at naught by ill-will, envy and spite. So faith in God and good-will for mankind are the two weapons for the man of action in the world. Such action performed with faith and surrender to God does not bind man to the wheel of *karma*. On the other hand, it releases him from bondage.

Question : *Who are freed from the bondage of karma ?*

Answer : Those who practise the law of selfless action with faith in God are freed from the bondage of *karma*.

The Lord declares the awful fate of those who have no faith in Him, and who carp and cavil at his teaching.

32. ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान्विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२

32. *Ye tvetad abhyasuyanto nanutisthanti me matam* ।
sarvajnana vimudham stan viddhi nastan achetasah ॥ 32

Meaning : येतु *yetu :* but those, मे *me :* my, एतत् मतम् *etat matam :* this teaching, अभ्यसूयन्तः *abhyasuyantah :* carping at न अनुतिष्ठन्ति *na anutishtanti :* not practise, तान् *tan :* them, अचेतसः *achetasah :* devoid of discrimination, सर्वज्ञानविमूढान् *sarvajnanavimudhan :* deluded in all knowlenge, नष्टान् *nashtan :* ruined. विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : But those who carp at my teaching and do not practise it, know them as men deluded in all knowledge, devoid of discrimination and doomed to destruction.

Commentary : Those who carp and cavil at the spiritual teaching of the Lord are doomed to destruction. Driven by desires, haunted by hopes and fears, blasted by frustration, they live a restless life and die in darkness. And they pass the endless stream of birth and death, without rest or peace. They cannot understand the secret of the Supreme Brahman, nor the liberation from the bondange of action. Though a man is learned in the *Sastras*, knows many languages, is acquired with many spiritual theories, if he is devoid of faith in God and discriminative understanding, he is indeed an ignorant man who knows nothing. His mind is gross, his discrimination is confused, and so he wanders in the wilderness of the perishable world, tired, weary, and restless. Such men are lost, because they have no discrimination, no faith in the Lord.

The power of Nature is irresistible.

33. सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३

Sadrisam chestate swasyah prakriter jnanavan api ।
prakritim yanti bhutani nigrahah kim karishyati ॥ 33

Meaning : ज्ञानवानपि *jnanavan api :* even a wise man, स्वस्याः *swasyah :* of his own, प्रकृतेः *prakritah :* nature,

सदृशम् *sadrisam :* in accordance with (his nature), चेष्टते *cheshtate :* acts, भूतानि *bhutani :* beings, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim :* nature, यान्ति *yanti :* follow, निग्रहः *nigrahah :* restraint, किम् करिष्यति *kim karishyati :* what will do ?

Substance : Even a wise man acts according to his own nature. Beings follow nature; what can restraint do ?

Commentary : The term–a wise man (*Jananavan*) refers only to a learned man who intellectually understands the principles of religion and philosophy. He has yet to realise the Truth. Mere intellectual culture and understanding of the *Sastras* are powerless to control the tremendous power of natural instincts and tendencies with which a man is born in this world. Though he knows much of spiritual lore, yet he acts in conformity with his own nature, the impulses and thought–patterns formed through a series of births. If such is the case with a learned man, what to speak of the ignorant !

Here the Lord's purpose is to emphasise the power of the tendencies (*Samskaras*) which constitute the nature of all beings, and definitely not to discourage the practice of self–restraint. The verse that immediately follows insists on self–restraint as the only means to liberation. Let no man imagine that he can have an easy walk over Nature. No. It is necessary for the seeker to understand fully the mysterious power of Nature, and the tremendous will that is needed to change and transcend it. But it is clear that spiritual realisation is not possible unless all the blind prejudices and evil tendencies of the past are gradually eradicated. Surrender to the Lord and selfless devotion to duty are the means to liberate oneself from the tyranny of Nature by which man has been enslaved from time immemorial.

The need is stressed to resist attachment and aversion in regard to the objective world.

34. इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ ३४

34. *Indriyasye 'ndriyasya'rthe ragadveshau vyavasthitau* ।
tayor na vasam agacchet tau hyasya paripanthinau ॥ 34

Meaning : इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्य *indriyasyendriyasya* : of each and every sense, अर्थे *arthe* : in the object of the senses, रागद्वेषौ *ragadveshau* : attachment and aversion, व्यवस्थितौ *vyavasthitau* : abide, तयोः *tayoh* : of these two, वशम् *vasam* : sway, नागच्छेत् *na agacchet* : should not come under, तौ *tau* : these two, तु *tu* : indeed, अस्य *asya* : his, परिपन्थिनौ *paripanthinau* : (are) enemies.

Substance : In each of the senses abide attraction and repulsion for the objects of the senses. One should not come under their sway, for they are man's enemies.

Commentary : Here is the Lord's command about restraining the senses and conquering Nature. It would be wrong to interpret from the previous verse that the Lord was stating the impossibility of overcoming Nature. Man should not come under the sway of the material forces operating in the human personality. That is the Lord's injunction. So the whole progress of spiritual life is one continuous and systematic attempt to counteract the natural forces till they are completely subdued. All the different paths, methods, practices, and disciplines have only one end in view, and that is the conquest of Nature in all its subtle forms and manifestations.

Each of the five senses has a double current running in opposite directions. When the object is pleasing, it is delighted; when the object is disagreeable, it is pained: Attachment and repulsion are formed. So when the senses come into cantact with the multifarious objects of the world, it is sometimes attached to them, and sometimes repulsed from them. The same object may be pleasing sometimes and under changed conditions may cause pain. These reactions of the senses are termed '*raga*' and '*dvesha.*' These are inherent in the sense-world. The entire spiritual discipline

is to attain to a state of non-reaction or equal reaction to all the objects of the world under all conditions, whether they are agreeable or disagreeable. One who has acquired such equanimity is a *Yogi*, a *Sthitaprajna*.

Attachment and repulsion (*Raga* and *Dvesha*) are the eternal enemies of the spiritual aspirant. These pairs of opposites have long established their sway on the mind and the senses. And when man, by an enlightened consciousness, tries to equalise the reactions, the mind and the senses would stoutly refuse to submit to the new discipline. Thoughts and habits react. The aspirant has to remain firm and unyielding, and only then would he be able to stamp his will and attain mastery over the opposing forces. Devotion to God, selfless work, meditation on the real Self, grace of a *Guru*, are helpers to secure victory. Till then there is no rest or peace for man. When enemies enter a village they are dangerous, when they enter the house, they are still more dangerous; and when they find place in one's own heart, the danger is greatest. *Raga* and *Dvesha* are internal enemies. "Do not fall under their sway" is the Lord's command.

The internal reactious of each individual are determined by the accumulated force of serveral births. They are deep-rooted and well-established in the heart of man. The aspirant brings in his discrimination as the resisting power. The struggle goes on for a long time. That which is stronger wins. It is futile to lament about the persistence of past tendencies (*samskaras*). They are there, whether you want them or not. Cheerfully and with courage one has to fight them. The Lord's grace is on the side of the faithful aspirant. Nothing is impossible for him. Such should be the indomitable faith of the devotee, and the Lord's promise not to let down his devotee should give the aspirant the necessary will and inspiration, strength and courage to fight the battle till victory is achieved.

Question : *What is the nature of the senses ?*

Answer : Attachment and repulsion abide in the senses.

Question : *What should the aspirant do ?*

Answer : He should not come under their sway because they are his enemies.

The importance of performing one's own duty is declared.

35. श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३५

Sreyan svadharmo vigunah paradharmat svanusthitat ।
svadharme nidhanam sreyah paradharmo bhayavahah ॥ 35

Meaning : स्वनुष्ठितात् *svanushtitat :* well performed, परधर्मात् *paradharmat :* than the duty of another, विगुणः *vigunah :* without merit, स्वधर्मः *svadharmah :* one's own duty, श्रेयान् *sreyan :* better, स्वधर्मे *svadharme :* in performing one's duty, निधनम् *nidhanam:* death, श्रेयः *sreyah :* better, परधर्मः *paradharmah:* another's duty, भयावहः *bhayavahah :* fraught with fear.

Substance : One's own duty, ill-performed and without merit, is better than the duty of another well-discharged. Better is death in discharging one's own duty. Another's duty is fraught with fear.

Commentary : Arjuna is a Kshatriya. It is his duty to fight a righteous war though he may face death in the attempt. To neglect his duty and adopt the duty of another is dangerous, because it would upset the order of the world, and create confusion and chaos in society. In the First Discourse, Arjuna spoke in a mood of despondency that he would prefer to live on alms like a mendicant than kill his relations and friends in battle. The Lord here states the law for a Kshatriya and the danger of neglecting it and adopting the life of another.

The word *Svadharmah* may be taken to mean the law of the Self and *paradharma* may mean the law of the objective world, (i. e.) the pleasures of the senses and the physical body. Whatever is conducive to Self-realisation

should be followed, even it causes death in the attempt. Whatever draws away from *Atma-dharma* should be avoided. Fasting, penance and other *sadhanas* though irksome in the beginning confer great merit finally. They constitute *Atma-dharma.* On the other hand worldly pleasures though enjoyable at first, lead to pain and suffering. So the seeker should hold on to the Self and go on practicing the prescribed duties. Sometimes the seeker may feel that he is not making any progress, and that his *sadhana* is futile. In these moments of doubt the seeker should be cautious and firm. He should not abondon his practices. If he dies in the midst of his *Yoga-sadhana*, he does not perish. He attains to higher world and would come to act again into the human body to contiune his work. So the Lord exhorts the seeker not to give up *Svadharma, Atma-dharma* under any circumstances.

Question : *Between Svadharma and Paradharma which is better and why ?*

Answer : *Svadharma* is better though difficult to practice. *Paradharma* is fraught with fear, though easy to follow. By performing one's own duty, man realises God. Though one dies in the attempt, it is good for him.

Arjuna questions the Lord by what power man is forced to commit sin, even against his will.

अर्जुन उवाच

36. अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३६

Arjuna uvacha

Atha kena prayukto 'yam papam charati purushah ।
anicchannapi varshneya baladiva niyojitah ॥ 36

Arjuna said

Meaning : वार्ष्णेय *varshneya :* O Krishna ! अथ *atha :* then, अयं पुरुषः *ayam purushah :* this man, केन *kena :* by

what, प्रयुक्तः *prayuktah* : impelled, अनिच्छन्नपि *anicchan api* : though without wishing, बलात् *balat* : by force, नियोजितः *niyojitah* : constrained, इव *iva* : as it were, पापम् *papam* : sin, चरति *charati*: commits.

Substance : Arjuna said : O Krishna! Constrained by force as it were, by what does man commit sin even against his wish ?

Commentary : As the Lord continued his teaching about restraining the senses, overcoming *Raga* and *Dvesha*, and discharging one's duty, Arjuna was seized with a deep doubt about the mysterious force that seems to compel man into evil inspite of his effort to avoid it. Such a doubt will naturally occur to every seeker and so the question and the Lord's answer are of the greatest importance to mankind.

Who does not know that indulgence in sense-pleasures is a mental slavery! Who does not know that anger, spite, ill-will, envy and pride are wrong mental attitudes? And most of the people yield to them even against their wish. No one desires to do evil or commit sin and yet some mysterious force seems to drive mankind into evil and sinful ways of life. What is that mysterious power? Where does it abide? How can it be counteracted; These things are essential for all seekers to know.

One should have a clear understanding of the cause and source of evil, and then only can its activity be neutralised. There are some plants which persist in sprouting up again and again, though the stem is cut off repeatedly. If the roots are pulled out and destroyed, there is no further danger of their growth. So the cause of the sin should be known, and if the cause is removed, the resulting evil would not be there.

The force of evil is in man himself. It is this power that drives man to do evil, though he knows that it is evil, and though he desires to avoid it. The Lord explains the nature of this mysterious force from the next verse onwards.

There are three types of individuals – (1) those who are free from evil, (2) those who do not wish to do evil, and yet are under its sway, (3) those who do evil knowing it to be such. The first are *Jivanmukthas*, rare men who have crossed the ocean of *samsara*. The tricks and subterfuges of *Maya* cannot betray them into evil at any time and for any reason. The second type of men are sincere seekers. Arjuna's question is from the stand point of this type of men. The third type of men are evil-minded, sinful, plunged in darkness, revelling in sensuality, and embodying all that is hateful and self-destructive.

श्री भगवानुवाच

37. काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३७

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Kama esha krodha esha rajoguna samudbhavah ।
mahasano mahapapma viddhyenamiha vairinam ॥ 37

श्री भगवानुवाच *Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The blessed Lord Said–

Meaning : एषः *eshah* : this, रजोगुणसमुद्भवः *rajoguna-samudbhavah* : born of Rajoguna, कामः *kamah* : desire, एषः *eshah* : this, क्रोधः *krodhah* : anger, महाशनः *mahasanah* : all-devouring, महापाप्मा *mahapapma*, all sinful, एनम् *enam* : this, इह *Iha* : here, वैरिणम् *vairinam* : the foe, विद्धि *viddhi* : know.

Substance : *The Blessed Lord said :* It is desire, it is anger, born of *Rajoguna* (the impulse of action), all-consuming and all-evil. Know this as the enemy here.

Commentary : Here the Lord explains the secret of the mysterious force that compels man to commit sin, though he does not wish it. Knowing full-well that an act is evil, and sincerely wishing to avoid it, man, however, does it

in spite of himself. This is within the experience of all human beings. The Lord analyses the force, and says that the twin evils of *kama* and *krodha* constitute the power behind all the sins committed by man.

Kama and *Krodha* are wicked twins like Ravana and Kumbbakarna, like Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. The aforesaid *raga* and *dvesha* are manifestations of *kama* and *Krodha*. Of these two, *kama* is the first and *krodha* is but the effect of *kama*. The first is the cause and the second is the effect. When there is no cause, there can be no effect. When there is no *kama*, there is no *krodha*. *Kama* is therefore said to be the first of the six evil tendencies in man–*Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada* and *Matsarya*. *Kama* is the captain of the team of inimical forces which harass mankind, and stand directly in the way of Self–realisation.

The Lord describes *Kama* and *Krodha* by two significant epithets. *Kama* is all–devouring (*mahasanah*). Like fire it burns, consuming everything that is offered to satisfy its hunger for enjoyment. Fire is not extinguished so long as you pour oblations of oil and ghee into it. They only add to its consuming power. Such is *kama*. The attempt to satisfy it only makes it stronger and more clamorous for further and further enjoyment. How then can it be conquered ? Let no fuel be added to the fire and the fire weakens and dies in ashes. So also, let no attempt be made to satisfy *kama*, and it dies a natural death. The rejection of desire as soon as it is born is the way to overcome it. Constant inquiry into the nature of the Self, which is bliss itself, will naturally eliminate desires from the mind. When man by his birth–right is the very source and fountain–head of all bliss, why does he need small external objects to give him joy and pleasure ? So the seeker should constantly contemplate the blissful nature of his real Self.

Those twin evils are all sinful (*mahapapma*). The most heinus sins are committed, the greatest disasters of the human race are caused by these forces. The little good that

man has accumulated through a series of births is neutralised and overweighed by the amount of sin committed by *kama* and *krodha*. Lust and greed form the food for *kama*. When *kama* is frustrated it takes the ugly form of *krodha* (wrath).

Again they are described as the foes of man. They are the nearest and the greatest enemies of man. Through a series of births they have acquired an undisputed mastery over the heart of man. Having occupied the innermost recesses of the heart, they have been exercising control and authority over man's impulses and conduct in the material world. The whole personality of man is thus enslaved by a secret and powerful enemy for a long time. They have brought their associates also–*lobha, moha, mada* and *matsarya*–into the inner part of man's heart. These evils act with wonderful co–ordination. If one is supressed another comes up. If that is suppressed, the former crops up again. With different shapes and forms, at unexpected time and in unexpected places, they show themselves up and harass the weak and unfortunate human being.

Therefore the Lord speaks inspiring words to the seeker to conquer the enemy with courage and determination, however long and hard the struggle may be. The forth–coming verses ending with '*Jahi satrum mahabaho*' is the Lord's magnificient exhortation to defeat and destroy the enemy in every way possible.

Question : *What is the force that compels man to commit sin?*

Answer : It is *Kama*, and it is *Krodha*.

Question : *What is the nature of these twin–evils ?*

Answer : They are all–devouring and all–sinful, and they are the constant enemies of the spiritual seeker.

38. धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८

Dhumena'vriyate vahnir yatha 'darso malena cha ।
yatho'lbena 'vrito garbhas tatha tene 'dam avritam ॥ 38

Meaning : यथा *yatha :* as, धूमेन *dhumena :* by smoke, वह्निः *vahnih :* fire, आव्रियते *avriyate :* is enveloped, यथा *yatha :* as, आदर्शः च *adarsah cha :* and a mirror, मलेन *malena :* by dust (is enveloped), यथा *yatha :* as, उल्बेन *ulbena :* by the amnion, गर्भः *garbhah :* embryo (is enveloped), आवृतः *Avritah :* enveloped, तथा *tatha :* so, तेन *tena :* by it (Kama and krodha), इदम् *idam :* this (knowledge of the Self), आवृतम् *avritam :* is enveloped.

Substance : As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as embryo by the amnion, so this knowledge of the Self is enveloped by *Kama* and *Krodha.*

Commentary : In the heart of every being, the light of *Atma* is always shining. But it is not seen because it is covered up by *kama* and *krodha.* To explain this, the Lord uses three illustrations – (1) as fire being covered by smoke, (2) a mirror being covered by dust, and (3) the embryo being enveloped by the amnion. When smoke is cleared away by fanning, the fire underneath shines bright. When the dust is rubbed off, the mirror shines in all its purity. Also, when the amnion is removed the new born comes out free from the womb. In the same way, when the enveloping force of *kama* is dispelled by the practice of devotion, dispassion, selfless action, and knowledge, the light of *Atma* shines forth in all its effulgence. When *Atma* manifests, man attains liberation, and gets freedom from all enveloping forces.

Moreover fire is not extinguished by smoke, nor does the mirror lose its original purity by dust. The enveloping amnion does no harm to the embryo. So also, though *kama* envelops *Atma, Atma* is not at all affected by it. Thus even in the state of ignorance, *Atma* is there in all its original purity. It is never touched or transformed or acted upon by anything. It remains in its own pristine purity. As it is covered up, it does not manifest its light. That is all. When the covering is taken off, it shines forth as it is. There is no change in *Atma.* Knowledge

simply means our being conscious of the purity of *Atma. Atma* is there, even when you do not know it. One's ignorance or knowledge of *Atma* does not make any difference in its existence, for it exists by its own right, unconditioned by time, place, and causation. If a person changes his dress, does it make any difference in the body itself ? No. The change is in the dress and not in the body. Looking at a landscape through a hole, one can see only a part of it. As the opening is made bigger and bigger, more and more of the landscape is revealed. All the time it is not the landscape that is changing. It is the opening that changes. So it is with *Atma.* When *kama* covers it, people do not see it, when *kama* is cast away they see it. *Atma* is there always, eternally pure and eternally perfect.

Man's duty is to realise *Atma* by taking off the flimsy covering that is hiding the effulgent spirit. It is in one sense not difficult at all. A fan can blow off the smoke, a piece of cloth can rub the dust away from the mirror. So let the seeker take courage and slowly remove the enveloping *Kama* from his heart. The light of the Self reveals itself slowly but surely.

This (*Idam*)–knowledge of the Self. In the succeeding verse the word *Jnanam* is directly used, and so the pronoun 'this' here should convey the same meaning–knowledge of the Self.

Question : *By what is the knowledge of Atma covered ?*

Answer : By *kama.*

Question : *How ?*

Answer : As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror is covered by dust, as the embryo is covered by the amnion, so is *Atma* covered by *kama.*

Kama is compared to fire.

39\. आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३९

39. *Avritam jnanam etena jnanino nityavairina* ।
kamarupena kaunteya dushpurena 'nalena cha ॥ 39

Meaning : कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna ! दुष्पूरेण *dushpurena :* insatiable, अनलेन च *analena cha :* and by the fire, कामरूपेण *kamarupena :* whose form is desire, ज्ञानिनः *jnaninah :* of the wise, नित्यवैरिणा *nityavairina :* by the everlasting foe, एतेन *etena :* by this (Kama), ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge of the Self, आवृतम् *avritam :* is enveloped.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Knowledge of the Self is covered by this everlasting foe of the wise in the form of desire, insatiable like fire.

Commentary : The Lord elaborates the theme of *kama*, for it is the worst enemy of man, and more of its nature should be understood before one could deal with it in a suitable manner and overcome its destructive influence. *Kama* is the ever-lasting foe of the wise (*Nitya Vairi*) and it is insatiable like fire. Birth after birth, this formidable foe harasses man continuously. External enemies are not so persistent. Some times a former enemy may become a present friend. So they are not perpetual enemies. But *Kama* is a constant foe, ever-scheming and plotting how to fringe and bring down the spiritual aspirant. Highly learned scholars, kings and heroes, the gods of the different worlds, are struck down by *kama* at one time or other. Even highly advanced spiritual seekers, if they are not careful for a minute, are trapped by *kama* and lose their freedom. Though its external manifestations are checked by conscious efforts, yet it remains in a seed-form in the heart, and comes out when there is a suitable opportunity. So the seeker should be vigilent and with firm determination should strike down the enemy whenever he lifts his head in any form whatsoever.

Insatiable like the fire : Like fire, *kama* can never be appeased. Any amount of fuel my be thrown into fire. Yet we do

not find the fire crying 'enough'. Such is *kama*. Enjoyments do not reduce the power of *kama*. On the other hand, its becomes stronger and stronger after every pleasure offered to appease it. It is already described as 'all-devouring' (*mahasana*). The attempt to fill *kama* is as futile as to draw water from a river in a sieve. The word *analena* meaning fire is significant. *Alam* means enough, *analam* means not enough. That is, fire never says 'enough' however much you may feed it with fuel. Such is *kama*, and like fire, it burns any one who touches it. So the policy of appeasement should be given up, and a total war should be declared against the enemy.

Everlasting foe of the wise : To the spiritual aspirant who is striving to know the Truth, *kama* is the immediate and most dangerous foe. When one is awakened from the dream of desire followed by enjoyment, and enjoyment followed by further desire he tries to progress towards Truth. Then he would understand how *kama* had enslaved him, how bitter and short-lived its pleasures were, how hard and long should be the struggle to destroy this subtle enemy whom he fed and entertained as the ruling principle of his life through a series of births.

Question : *By what is the knowledge of Self covered ?*

Answer : By *kama*.

Question *What is its nature ?*

Answer : It is the constant foe of the wise, and all-consuming and insatiable like fire.

The origin and source of kama is explained.

40. इन्द्रियाणि मनोबुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४०

Indriyani manobuddhir asyadhisthanam uchyate ।
etair vimohayatyesha jnanam avritya dehinam ॥ 40

Meaning : इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani :* the senses, मनः *manah :* the mind, बुद्धिः *buddhih :* intellect, अस्य *asya :* its (kama's),

अधिष्ठानम् *adhishtanam :* seat, उच्यते *uchyate :* is said, एषः *eshah :* this (kama), एतैः *etaih :* by these (senses etc.), ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* wisdom, आवृत्य *avritya :* enveloping, देहिनम् *dehinam :* of the embodied, विमोहयति *vimohayati :* deludes (man).

Substance : The senses, the mind, and the intellect are the seat of *kama.* Functioning through them this *kama* deludes the embodied by veiling the wisdom.

Commentary : When a person wants to destroy an enemy, he must first of all know what his stronghold is, and from which place he is attacking him. The stronghold of *kama* is the senses, the mind, and the intellect. With these under its power, *kama* veils the knowledge of Self and deludes mankind by attachment to the body and the material world. So the first step for the seeker is to bring the senses under his own control, by driving out *kama* from its stronghold. Then the mind becomes pure, and the discriminative intellect clear. When *kama* is thus driven out of its hiding place and feeding ground, it becomes weak and gradually dies for want of sustenance.

Question : *What is the seat of kama ?*

Answer : The senses, the mind and the intellect together form the abode of *kama.* With their aid, *kama* deludes man by veiling the wisdom of the embodied.

The method of conquering kama is pointed out.

41. तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ ४१

Tasmat tvam indriyany adau niyamya bharatarshabha ।
papmanam prajahi hyenam jnanavijnana nasanam ॥ 41

Meaning : भरतर्षभ *bharatarshabha :* O best of the Bharatas, तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, त्वम् : *tvam :* you, आदौ *adau :* in

the beginning, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani :* the senses, नियम्य *niyamya :* having controlled, ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् *jnanavijnana nasanam :* destroyer of knowledge and realisation, पाप्मानम् *papmanam :* sinful, एनम् *enam :* this (kama), प्रजहिहि *prajahi hy :* kill surely.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Therefore, having controlled the sensess in the begining, kill surely this *kama*, the sinful destroyer of knowledge and Self-realisation.

Commentary : *Kama* (lust) functions by first enslaving the senses, then deluding the mind, and then confusing the intellect. In the actual act of enjoyment no one can make the division. But *sadhana* consists in analysing the mechanism of the body and mind. The Lord insists on sense-control as the first step to get rid of *kama.* The senses are like the main gateway of a fort. If the enemy is attacked and repelled at the gate, he cannot enter the fort.. The senses should not be allowed to possess the mind by filling it with sense-objects of pleasure. So the senses should be controlled first. The enjoyments derived through the senses should be given up by the practice of discrimination and dispassion. This is the starting point of spiritual advancement. The Lord says to every seeker "Whatever other obstacles and difficulties there may be, look to this first. Control the senses. Other things shall follow later." Therefore let every seeker examine the outgoing senses, and find out the objects towards which they are running. Then let him turn away from them by examining and understanding their filthy nature.

Sinful : The nature of *kama* is sin. It is all-sinful *mahapapma.* The most heinous sins are committed by man under the pressure of *Kama.* Thoughtful men know the cursed crimes that men commit by this horrible demon of *kama.* Blinded by *kama* man forgets what is right and wrong. All the *sastric* injunctions are violated, all common moral principles are set at naught, and shame and fear are lost, when the demands of *kama* press for immediate satisfaction. The

desire for lust and gold, position and power, have undone the best and wisest men even, and the world has suffered serious disasters in consequence.

Destroyer of knowledge and realisation : "*Jnana*' means knowledge acquired by the study of the '*Sastras*', '*Vijnana*' means direct knowledge of the Self. The first is indirect knowledge (*Paroksha Jnana*) and the second is direct knowledge (*Aparoksha Jnana*)– practical experience of the Self. Both are destroyed by *kama* What little knowledge is acquired, what little experience is acquired by the *sadhaka*, all this is cancelled and nullified by the virulence of *kama*. We see highly learned men and gifted people yielding to common temptations like the most unlearned and ignorant. Such is the overwhelming power of *kama*. But its power, like the gravitational pull of the earth, can work only up to a certain radius Those men who pass beyond its range are the free and the perfect. *Kama* cannot do anything to them. They are the *Jivanmuktas* – the living free–blessed men who live in the Self, and have absolutely no relish for the foul and filthy enjoyments of earthly life.

The Lord never for a moment says that *kama* cannot be conquered. That is not the import of these verses. Only the evil power of *kama* is explained in full, in order to inspire the aspirant with greater zeal and enthusiasm to overcome this deadly foe.

Prajahi: Conquer, that is the watch word, the war cry of the seeker. The Lord is behind every seeker, every sincere devotee. Therefore no man need be disheartened by thinking of the power of the inimical forces.

Question : *What is the first duty of the 'Sadhaka'* ?

Answer : Sense–control.

Question : *How will sense–control help* ?

Answer : It destroys *kama.*

Question : *How does the evil power of kama work* ?

Answer : It destroys both spiritual knowledge and experience.

The nature of Atma is explained.

42. इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ ४२

Indriyani paranyahur indriyebhyah param manah ।
manasastu para buddhir yo buddheh paratastu sah ॥ 42

Meaning: इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani :* the senses, पराणि *parani :* superior (to the body), इन्द्रियेभ्यः *indriyebhyah :* to the senses, मनः *manah :* the mind, परम् *param :* superior, मनसस्तु *manasah tu :* but to the mind, बुद्धिः *budhihi :* the intellect, परा *para :* superior, बुद्धेः *buddheh :* than the intellect, परतः *paratah :* greater, यः तु *yah tu :* but who, सः *sah :* he (Self), (इति) आहुः (*Iti*) *ahuh :* thus (they) say.

Substance : They say that the senses are superior (to the body), superior to the senses is the mind, superior to the mind is the intellect, but superior than the intellect is He (the *Atman*).

Commentary : In the previous verses, sense–restraint is enjoined as the first condition of spiritual progress. But how to achieve it ? The Lord answers it in this verse. Unless one stands above his enemy, or acquires greater strength than the enemy, he cannot defeat him. So one should undestand what the position of the senses is in the organism of the human being. No doubt the senses are superior to the bodily organs like hands and legs, because they have a wider range of activity. But the mind is superior to the senses, because it has a still wider range of activity and endowed with higher powers of generating action. But the intellect is superior to the mind, because the operations of the mind are subject to the dictates of the intellect which directs the mind in its various activities. But higher than the intellect and greater than all, stands the *Atma*, the omnipotent, omnisient and omnipresent, ever–blissful Self. The Self is All–mighty. Nothing can touch it or affect it. In the *Sankhya Yoga*

the Lord has already described the glory and indestructibility of *Atma*.

The *Atma* is the one conscious principle in the Universe. All else is *jada—Anatma*—a mass of insentience. It is the presence of *Atma* that gives life and activity to the insentient mass, right from the intellect down to the body. A ball of iron is illumined when fire enters and pervades it. So *Atma* enters and pervades the whole universe, giving it the appearance of life and activity. All this life belongs to *Atma*. He is the Reality in every thing.

So, keeping oneself in the *Atmic* state is the most powerful antidote to the intellect. When one acquires a stand in *Atma*, these lower functional instruments are deprived of the usual ramblings in the world of matter, and so they automatically come to a standstill in their own respective positions. They can no longer draw the person out and entangle him in the meshes of sense-enjoyments. Even the relish or taste for enjoyment is killed when *Atma* is directly perceived and experienced.

Thus the Lord points out the way to conquer the senses, the mind, and the intellect, all at once. 'Never descend to the lower plane of the senses. All should ascend to the state of *Atma*',-this is the injunction of the Lord. The lower things then cannot trouble the person for he would then understand that he is actually the witness to the modifications of the mind and the senses, and have nothing to do with them at all. 'We are not the body, we are not the senses, we are not the mind, we are not the intellect, we are blessed *Atma*, pure and perfect, infinite and ever-blessful'.–When this thought is firmly held, the senses lose their power over the individual and cannot betray him into sinful acts and ways of life.

Question : *What is the state of Atma?*

Answer : *Atma* is superior to the senses, the mind and the intellect. It is the ruler of all.

The Lord ends this discourse by exhorting Arjuna to conquer Kama by the realisation of Atma.

43. एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३

Evam buddheh param buddhva
samstabhya'tmanam atmana ।
jahi satrum mahabaho
kamarupam durasadam ॥ 43

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna, एवम् *evam* : thus, बुद्धेः परम् *buddeh param* : what is superior to the intellect (Atma), बुद्ध्वा *budhva* : having known, आत्मना *atmana* : with intellect, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : the self (i. e). the senses, body and mind, संस्तभ्य *samstabhya* : having restrained, दुरासदम् *durasadam* : hard to overcome, कामरूपम् *kamarupam* : in the form of desire, शत्रुम् *satrum* : enemy, जहि *jahi* : conquer.

Substance : O mighty-armed Arjuna! Thus, having known what is greater than the intellect (i. e.) *Atma*, and restraining the mind by the intellect conquer the foe (*kama*) in the form of desire which is indeed hard to overcome.

Commentary : The cause of all sorrow is the ignorance of man of his real Self. Thinking that he is the body, the senses and the mind, he attributes to himself all their distractions, disturbances, agitations and sufferings. This identification with the material body and the world is the root cause of all sorrow and suffering. So the Lord exhorts all mankind, "Know that you are the Self which is beyond the intellect. You are not the body. So take refuge in the Self and conquer the indomitable foe-*Kama*." This is the Lord's inspiring message to suffering humanity.

In fact, it is *Atma* that impregnates all material things with consciousness, power and activity. Whatever power is

displayed by the bodily organs, the senses, and the mind, all that power is derived from *Atma* which is One indivisible ocean of power and blessedness. But as we see, these insentient instruments have acquired the appearance of reality by the interpretation of *Avidya*. They have, as it were, become the real, and what is real (i. e.) *Atma* is covered up by them. People have, so to say, realised the unreal, and unrealised the real. Now, therefore, the seeker has to make the hard distinction between the apparently real, and the really real. He should distinguish the unreal which is appearing as the real. If the Reality, *Atma* is experienced the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect–would immediately be subdued and brought under control. Thus *Kama* is conquered, the bonds of ignorance are broken, the Power of the Supreme is realised.

Therefore, discrimination – persistent discrimination– between the real and the unreal is the first and foremost parctice for the aspirant. By this he would know that the various actions and functions of the senses, the mind and the intellect, have no absolute reality at all. *Atma* is separated from *Anatma*. Then all that is not *Atma* loses its mysterious power over the individual. Man then feels the freedom of the Self–the state of the *Jivanmukta*. The ignorant man has tied a strong knot between *Atma* and *Anatma*. This knot should be cut so that insentient matter is clearly distinguished from the life and light of *Atma*. To the realised man, *Atma* alone appears every where, as the immovable, unchinging, imperishable, substratum of all that exists. Then these senses and the mind remain under his control, and become servants to carry out the command of the master, the Self.

If the brake is applied, the fast–moving train comes to a standstill. If the connecting link is cut, the fast whirling wheel of the vast machine stops rotating. Thus the mighty wheel of birth and death comes to a stand–still, when the Self is realised. There is no other way to stop the wheel of *samsara*. If the phenomenal world is cut off from its deluding connection with the Self, the whole of it ceases to have any meaning or

life, or significance. The delusion banishes by the knowledge of *Atma*. The external world will be known as a mirage and no one would run after a mirage when he knows it to be such. The senses do not run after material things, the mind does not hanker after pleasures and enjoyment, and the intellect has no more any part to play in the scheme of things. There is no further quest for this or that. The Self alone shines as the eternal Truth. It is this grand and inspiring idea which is presented to us in this magnificient verse.

One should naturally feel the power of the inspiring words–'Oh! mighty–armed Arjuna! conquer the foe (*jahi satrum mahabaho.*)' Arjuna is addressed as the mighty–armed warrior. True. The aspirant should be like Arjuna, a hero who knows no defeat, who is ready to sacrifice his life for attaining the highest. His motto should be 'Conquer'. But what kind of foe is he to conquer? The foe to be conquered is hard indeed to overcome (*durasadam*). It is no use to under–estimate the power of the enemy. The enemy (*Kama*) is power–ful, because it has sent its roots deep into the heart of man and has developed into a mighty many–branched tree. It should be cut and the roots pulled out of the solid earth. The sword that can cut this mighty tree of *Kama* is detachment from the unreal and identification with *Atma*. This is the axe which would cut the mighty tree.

Knowledge of the Self is the last word of the Lord in this Discourse, *Karma Yoga*, the *Yoga* of action. We understand that *Karma yoga* demands detachment and desirelessness and this is possible only when man understands *Atma*. So know–ledge is the foundation of *Karma yoga*. *Nishkama Karma* leads to *Jnana*, and *Jnana* makes *Nishkama Karma* possible. So those who desire to cross the ocean of sorrow, those who aspire to conquer *Kama*, those who seek for liberation, should understand their real nature, that they are *Atma* and not dead matter, the body, etc. When they know this, whether they are in cities or forest, whether they are young or old, whether they work or cease to work, they would enjoy the supreme peace of *Atma*, and the world has no power to bind them again.

Question : *How can one conquer Kama ?*

Answer : If he knows that he is *Atma*, higher than the intellect, and if he is firmly established in the Self-state, *Kama* is conquered.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्री कृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मयोगो नाम
तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Karma Yogo nama tritiyo 'dhyayah.

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavadgita,
the science of the Enternal, the scripture of *Yoga*,
the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna
ends the Third Discourse entitled

Karma Yoga (The *Yoga* of Action)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ चतुर्थोऽध्यायः

Atha Chaturdhodhyayah

FOURTH DISCOURSE

ज्ञान योगः

JNANA YOGA

THE YOGA OF KNOWLEDGE

The title of the Discourse :

This Discourse is entitled the *Yoga* of Knowledge (*Jnana Yoga*), because it deals with the investigation of supreme wisdom. In this are mentioned Jnana tapas, Jnana yajna, Jnana nauka, Jnana agni, Jnana khadga, and all that has reference to knowledge and understanding of the Self. The significance of spiritual knowledge, and the qualifications of the man of knowledge are elaborately stated in this Discourse, and so it is entitled *Jnana Yoga*.

Main Points of the Discourse :

1) The power of the Lord and mention of *Nishkama Karma*. (1–18)

2) The pure conduct of the *Jnani*. (19–23)

3) An account of various *Yajnas*, and the superiority of *Jnana Yajna*. (24–32)

4) The wonderful efficacy of *Jnana*. (33–42)

How the Discourse is connected with the previous one :–

The highest truth is that by desireless action the mind is purified, and in the pure mind the Self is reflected clearly, and man attains liberation, *Moksha*. In the Discourse on *Karma Yoga* all the principles and doctrines of desireless action are discussed and declared by the Lord. The present Discourse leads to the highest wisdom. So the Lord here propounds the theory and practice of Self-Knowledge. Though knowledge is its main theme, mention is made of action (*Karma*) also. The Lord starts the Discourse by narrating how He taught the *Yoga* of action (which leads to knowledge, *Jnana*) to *Vivasvan* (Sun-God) and how it was handed down to Manu, and from Manu to *Ikshvaku*.

श्री भगवानुवाच

1. इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान्मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Imam vivasvate yogam proktavan aham avyayam ।
vivasvan manave praha manur ikshvakave 'bravit ॥ 1

The Blessed Lord said :

Meaning : अव्ययम् *avyayam :* imperishable, इमं योगम् *imam yogam :* this yoga of action (nishkama karma), अहम् *aham :* I, विवस्वते *vivasvate :* to Vivasvan (sun), प्रोक्तवान् *proktavan :* taught, मनवे *manave :* to Manu, प्राह *praha :* taught, मनुः *manuh :* Manu, इक्ष्वाकवे *ikshvakave :* to Ikshvaku, अब्रवीत् *abravit :* taught.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : This imperishable *Yoga* of action (and the wisdom arising from it) I taught to *Vivasvan* (the Sun) at the beginning of creation. *Vivasvan* taught it to his son *Manu*, and *Manu* to his son *Ikshvaku*.

Commentary : The Lord at first taught the secreet of *'nishkama karma'* to the Sun, and through him the Emperor-saints learnt it. By the power of this *Yoga*, the mind is purified and the Self is realised. All those who practised this *Yoga* became sages and attained freedom and perfection. Though they may belong to different strata of society, rich or poor, all of them attained the highest reward of truth and perfection.

Imperishable : The *yoga* is imperishable, because, as long as the universe lasts, work in some form or other has to be done, and desireless work is the direct road leading to ***Moksha***. At all times, under all circumstances desireless action is the law of spiritual life, and out of it arises knowledge of the Self. So the *Yoga* is imperishable. As long as mankind exists, this law holds good as the direct path to emancipation.

Question : *What is the merit of 'nishkama karma'* ?

Answer : It is imperishable and yields the highest point of liberation.

Question : *How did it spread in the world* ?

Answer : The Lord taught it to *Vivasvan* (the sun) at the beginning of creation, and *Vivasvan* taught it to *Manu* and *Manu* to *Ikshvaku*.

2. एवं परम्पराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परंतप ॥ २

Evam parampara praptam imam rajarshayo viduh ।
sa kaleneha mahata yoga nastah parantapa ॥ 2

Meaning : परन्तप *parantapa :* O Arjuna, scorcher of enemies, एवम् *evam :* thus, परम्पराप्राप्तम् *paramparapraptam :* handed down in regular succession, इमम् *imam :* this (yoga), राजर्षयः *rajarshayah :* Royal Sages, विदुः *viduh :* knew, महता कालेन *mahata kalena :* by long lapse of time, सयोगः *sa yogah :* that yoga, इह *iha :* in the world, नष्टः *nashtah :* was lost.

Substance : O Arjuna! The royal sages know this (*yoga*) which was handed down in regular succession from generation to generation. But by long lapse of time, this *Yoga* was lost to the world.

Commentary : *Royal sages*– Kings who knew *Brahmavidya* are called royal sages. They are *Jnanis* as well as rulers, who possessed royalty and wisdom together. In earliest times several Kings and emperors were endowed with Self–knowledge. The term '*Rishi*' is a title. Any one can acquire it. Even an ordinary man becomes a '*Rishi*' when he comes to possess *Atma vidya.* So, the man who conquers the senses and mind, who is able to practise *nishkama karma*, and who has attained a glimpse of the Supreme Self is a *Rishi*.

We have to understand that in former ages, *Kings* were the real possessors of *Brahma vidya.* This proves that worldly life is not in any way a barrier to *Atma vidya.* Let us imagine the life of a King in former times. He was the supreme power of the state, and he was responsible for the administration of the whole kingdom. How many cares and anxieties had he in discharging his royal duties. And yet, it was the king who acquired and possessed the highest wisdom. The practical application af *Vedanta* to actual life was the contribution of these great monarchs to the world. Let us hear the words of Swami Vivekananda on this point. "In various Upanishads we find that this *Vedanta* philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the very best parts of it were thought out by brains which were busiest in the every day affairs of life. We cannot conceive any man busier than an absolute monarch, a man ruling over millions of people and yet, some of these rulers were deep thinkers." Arjuna comes of a noble family of royal sages. So it would not be difficult for him to tread the path of the ancient kings who were adepts both in worldly matters and spiritual knowledge.

It does not mean that others are not qualified for this *Yoga.* In fact the Lord's message is for people who are engaged in the different avocations of life, like teachers

politicians, administrators, agriculturists or shop-keepers etc. Very often we hear people brushing aside anything of spiritual knowledge as an obstacle to their worldly activities, which they say are necessary for the maintenance of this life. This verse condemns such an apathetic attitude to spiritual life, because it is pointed out that monarchs have practised this *Yoga* with great advantage to their spiritual and parctical life.

Was lost : This does not mean that *Karma Yoga* as a spiritual path was completely destroyed. Some incidents might have caused neglect of this *Yoga* for the time being. But it cannot be destroyed as it is imperishable–*Avyayam.* Just as the Lord is eternal, even so the *Dharma* established by Him is eternal.

3. स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३

Sa eva 'yam maya te 'dya yogah proktah puratanah ।
bhakto 'si me sakha che 'ti rahasyam hyetaduttamam ॥ 3

Meaning : मे *me :* my, भक्तः *bhaktah :* my devotee, सखा च *sakha cha :* and friend, असि इति *Asi iti :* thus, thou art, पुरातनः *puratanah :* ancient, स एव *sa eva :* even that, अयं योगः *ayam yogah :* this yoga of nishkama karma, अद्य *adya :* now, ते *te :* to you, मया *maya :* by me, प्रोक्तः *proktah :* is taught, उत्तमम् *uttamam :* best, एतत् *etat :* this, रहस्यम् हि *rahasyam hi :* secret indeed.

Substance : This same anicent *Yoga* has now been taught by Me, for you are My devotee and friend. It is indeed the supreme secret.

Commentary : The spiritual path of *Karma Yoga* is not a new invention. It is an ancient path. But owing to the change of times, it was covered up and neglected for some time. But it is imperishable. When spiritual *Dharma* suffers decline, the Lord incarnates Himself to re-establish it. Great spiritual

men like Sankara and others come into the world to reclaim the declining *Dharma* and re-establish it in the world. This same ancient knowledge is now taught to Arjuna by Lord Krishna.

Why should the Lord choose Arjuna only to be the recipient of this knowledge? This is answered by this verse. Arjuna was a devotee and a friend of the Lord. Therefore this supreme secret was revealed to him. Whoever loves the Lord is His friend and devotee. On him the Lord bestows supreme knowledge.

So one should acquire the faith and devotion of Arjuna, and to such a man the Lord Himself offers all the secrets of spiritual knowledge. The Lord has no attachment of friend or foe. Whoever loves Him receives His love and compassion. Arjuna's faith in the Lord has won for him a place in the heart of Krishna, and hence the divine message was offered to him.

Best secret : The spiritual path of '*nishkama karma*' is not only a secret but a royal path to knowledge. Such a precious secret cannot be thrown away carelessly on indifferent people who can neither understand it nor wish to practise it. The right man should be chosen to communicate the secret of perfection. Arjuna was the right man because he had devotion and love for the Lord.

Question : *What is the excellence of Karma Yoga ?*

Answer : It is the ancient path of wisdom; it is the supreme secret.

Question : *Why did the Lord teach it to Arjuna ?*

Answer : Because Arjuna was the devotee and friend of the Lord.

Arjuna's doubt :

अर्जुन उवाच

4. अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ ४

Arjuna uvacha

Aparam bhavato janma param janma vivasvatah ।
kathametad vijaniyam tvam adau proktavan iti ॥ 4

Meaning : भवतः *bhavatah :* your, जन्म *janma :* birth, अपरम् *aparam :* later, विवस्वतः *vivasvatah :* of vivasvan (sun), जन्म *janma :* birth, परम् *param :* earlier, आदौ *adau :* in the beginning, त्वम् *tvam :* you, प्रोक्तवान् *proktavan :* taught, इति *iti :* thus, एतत् *etat :* this, कथम् *katham :* how, विजानीयाम् *vijaniyam :* am I to understand ?

Substance : Arjuna said : Later was your birth, earlier the birth of Vivasvan (Sun); how then am I to understand that you taught it to him in the beginning ?

Commentary : In the *Rajasuya Yaga*, Arjuna has already come to know that Krishna is the eternal Lord of the Universe, though he is apparently the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Still, it is quite possible that the supreme secret of the Lord's incarnation might have appeared as a mystery to Arjuna, and he desired that the Lord Himself should unravel the mystery. Arjuna's doubt is the doubt of all ordinary human beings, and so the Lord's answer is intended to enlighten mankind about the mystery of His incarnation in the world.

Indeed, Lord Krishna is not a material form composed of the five elements as is the body of a human being. He is the eternal all-pervading Supreme Being of the Universe. This very truth is declared by the Lord in his reply to Arjuna. This universe and all that is in it can be looked at from three planes of vision. As soon as one sees a material object, man or animal or plant or stone or any thing else, he takes in the object through the visual sense organ – the form, the colour, shape and complexion and other aspects of its external appearance. When he rises to the mental plane, he considers the character, qualities and nature of the object which could be understood only by the mind. When he rises higher still, he finds that all

this universe with all that exists in it is nothing but the soul, the *Atma*-the supreme Sacchidananda. This is the spiritual plane of vision. The former two are relative truths. The last is the Absolute Truth. To distinguish this relative from the Absolute, and hold on to the Absolute is the aim of spiritual *Sadhana*.

The Lord declares His real nature and supreme power.

श्री भगवानुवाच

5. बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥ ५

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Bahuni me vyatitani janmani tava cha'rjuna
tanyaham veda sarvani na tvam vettha parantapa ॥ 5

श्री भगवानुवाच–*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The blessed Lord said :

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna ! मे *me :* Mine, तव च *tava cha :* and your, बहूनि *bahuni :* many, जन्मानि *janmani:* births, व्यतीतानि *vyatitani :* have passed away, तानि *tani :* them, सर्वाणि *sarvani :* all, अहम् *aham :* I, वेद *veda :* know, परन्तप *parantapa :* O Searcher of Enemies (Arjuna), त्वम् *tvam :* you, नवेत्थ *na vettha :* do not know.

Substance : The Blessed Lord said : O Arjuna !. Many births of Mine have passed as well as yours. I know them all but you know them not.

Commentary : Iswara, the Lord and Jiva, the personalised man are both of the same substance – the Supreme Brahman. Iswara is the Lord of *Maya;* and *Jiva* is subject to *Maya.* Iswara incarnates himself by controlling *Maya,* for the purpose of establishing *Dharma* in the world. But the *Jiva* is born again and again to work out his own *karma,* under the power and control of *Maya.* Since the Lord is the Lord of *Maya,* He knows all His incarnations from the beginning of creation, whereas the *Jiva* forgets them by the deluding power of *Maya.*

On account of *Avidya,* man's knowledge is confined to the present life only. In truth, every man has passed through myriads of births. He had parents, wives and children, and friends and enemies, wealth and prosperity, good and bad, during thousands of former births. But he has no knowledge of them now. If man fails to cut the bonds of *karma* by knowledge of *Atma,* he has still to pass through innumerable births. By virtue of the good that he has done, he has now acquired the human birth, endowed with reason and discrimination, and not the birth of a worm or reptile, bird or beast. Having this great good fortune if still he indulges in sense pleasures and gets lost in the meshes of *karma,* he is indeed an unfortunate being.

When the embriyo in the mother's womb attains the seventh month, he gets the vision of his past births for a brief time and then, he vows to the Lord that he would strive to dedicate his present birth to Self–realisation. But as soon as he comes out of the mother's womb, he forgets all and is lost in the pleasures and pains of earthly existence. Such is the power of *Maya.*

Let people not forget that they have had the same pleasures and pains during myriads of births, and when they realise this, they lose all taste and resort for worldly attachments and pleasures. Then comes true renunciation, and the march to their orginal state of perfection begins. So the Lord tells Arjuna that he (Arjuna) had several births in the past, though he is not able to recollect them on account of the mortal nature.

The Lord reveals the secret of the incarnation :

6. अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ६

Ajo 'pi sannavyayatma bhutanam iswaro 'pi san
prakritim svam adhisthaya sambhavamyatmamayaya ॥ 6

Meaning : (अहम् *aham :* I) अजः अपिसन् *ajah api san :* though having no birth, अव्ययात्मा *avyayatma :* though eternal, भूतानाम् *bhutanam :* of all beings, ईश्वरः अपि सन्

isvarah api san : the Lord and controller also, स्वम् *svam* : my own, प्रकृतिम् *prakritim* : Nature, अधिष्ठाय *adhishtaya* : controlling, आत्ममायया *atmamayaya* : by my Maya, (Sakti), सम्भवामि *sambhavami* : (I) come into being.

Substance : Though unborn and eternal in My being, the Lord and controller of all beings, controlling My own nature, I come into being by the power of My *Maya–Sakti*.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the Lord said that He too had passed through several births. And now, in order to clear any misconception concerning the nature of this birth the Lord explained the mystery and significance of his incarnation.

The common man takes birth as an effect of his own *Karma*. But the Lord has no such *Karma* to work out, and nothing has power over him. He is himself the Supreme Lord and master of the whole universe and rules over it by His mysterious power of *Maya*. Why then should he take birth? It is for the purpose of doing good to the world. He takes a form by His own will, using the power of *Maya* as His instrument. Three attributes of the Lord are mentioned here. He has no birth (*Ajah*). He is eternal (*Avyayatma*). He is the Supreme Lord of all beings (*Bhutanam isvarah*). From this we understand that Lord Krishna is apparently the son of Devaki and Vasudeva, but really the Eternal Being, the Lord of the Universe.

Question : *What is the nature of the Lord* ?

Answer : He is birthless, eternal, the controller of all beings, and the Lord of ***Maya***.

Question : ***How then does He take birth as a personal being*** ?

Answer : By controlling His nature, God incarnates Himself as a personal being by the power of His own *Maya*.

The Lord declares the purpose of His Incarnation :

7. यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७

Yada–yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanamadharmasya tada'tmanam srijamyaham 7

Meaning: भारत *bharata* : O Arjuna ! यदा यदा *yadayada* : whenever, धर्मस्य *dharmasya* : of righteousness, ग्लानिः *glanih* : decline, अधर्मस्य *adharmasya* : of evil, अभ्युत्थानम् *abhuthanam* : rise, भवति *bhavati* : happens, तदा *tada* : then, आत्मानम् *atmanam* : Myself, हि *hi* : surely, अहम् *aham* : I, सृजामि *srijami* : manifest.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of evil, I manifest Myself.

Commentary : The imperative necessity of *Dharma* as the basic principle of man's existence, peace and happiness, is declared by the Lord. *Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*–If one protects *Dharma*, *Dharma* protects him, *Dharma* alone gives peace and prosperity to humanity. So when the laws of righteousness are violated and suppressed, the Lord has to manifest Himself for re-establishing *Dharma*. Otherwise the universe falls to pieces. Men destroy themseles in a hundred ways. The whole scheme of creation will be disturbed and the very purpose of human existence is defeated. So the righteous way of life has to be kept clear and clean for humanity to tread the path of God–realisation. For that purpose, the Lord manifests Himself. Therefore whoever follows the ***Dharmic*** way of life is doing God's work. Whoever defies the ***Dharma*** is the foe of the Lord, and he shall be destroyed by the Lord.

Question : ***When does the Lord manifest Himself*** ?

Answer : When righteousness declines and evil rises, the Lord manifests Himself.

8. परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ ८

Paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya cha duskritam
dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge 8

Meaning : साधूनाम् *sadhunam* : of the good, परित्राणाय *paritranaya* : for the protection, दुष्कृताम् *dushkritam* : of the wicked, विनाशायच *vinasaya cha* : and for the destruction, धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय *dharma samsthapanarthaya* : for establishing Dharma, युगेयुगे *yuge yuge* : in every age, सम्भवामि *sambhavami*: I take birth.

Substance : For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for establishing *Dharma*, I take birth in very age.

Commentary : The Lord Himself protects the good and the righteous. By obeying the laws of *Dharma*, man acquires the right of protection by the Lord, whose protecting hand never fails at any time. Thus the Lord's promise to the righteous is the only protection that a good man seeks in his perilous life. He escapes from the bonds of *samsara* easily. He crosses the ocean of ignorance quickly. He attains freedom. One should understand that there are internal enemies of man and the spiritual path and these foes in the heart of man are all destroyed by the Lord's grace. So for those devotees who have faith in the Lord, there is no fear either from the external or internal enemies, whoever they are and whatever power they may wield.

Besides protecting the good, the destruction of the wicked is the second vow of the Lord. So the spiritual seeker should be careful and vigilent. He should be far away from evil and evil men. He should tread the path of *Dharma*, for then the Lord is pleased, and when the Lord is pleased, nothing is impossible for them.

The third vow of the Lord is establishing *Dharma* in the world. *Dharma* is the life-breath of the Lord. It is the principle of human existence. It is the sustaining power of the whole universe. Any deviation from the law will immediately bring down the mighty structure of the universe. Hence the Lord has to manifest Himself to save the world from self-destruction by the force of evil.

When we study the history of the different incarnations of God, we find that He manifests Himself for any one or two or all the purposes mentioned above. The incarnation of Narasimha (Lion-man) came to eliminate Hiranya Kasipu and protect the devotee Prahlada. The incarnation of Sri Rama came to fulfil all the three vows of the Lord. He protected the good, destroyed the wicked Rakshasas, and established *Dharma* by holding sovereignity over the earth for several years.

The word '*Sadhu*' is not limited to *sanyasis* only. It refers to all who are righteous whatever may be their caste or position or occupation.

In every age : This does not mean that the Lord appears only once in a *yuga* (i. e.) cycle of time. It means that the Lord is ready to appear whenever there is need and wherever the necessity arises. The Lord responds to the call of the devotees at all times and under all circumstances.

The reader has to notice the special emphasis laid on the three key-words in the verse. '*Paritranaya*' is used instead of '*tranaya*'; '*vinasaya*' used instead of '*nasaya*'; '*samsthapanarthaya*' is used instead of '*sthapanarthaya*'. This shows the special significance attached to every one of the vows uttered by the Lord.

One may doubt how the Lord who is the embodiment of all love and compassion could punish the wicked who are also His children. To punish the wicked is not an act of hatred but a measure of the Lord's mercy to bring them into the fold of the righteous. Besides this, unless evil is removed, it spreads like wild fire and consumes the entire humanity. Evil is a cancer in the human organism. If it is not removed by an operation, it will poison the whole system and destroys the entire man. So it is necessary that the evil-doers should be punished to save mankind from total corruption and death.

Those who understand the mystery of the Lord's divine birth and work have no rebirth.

9. जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ ९

Janma karma cha me divyamevam yo vetti tattvatah ।
tyaktva deham punarjanma nai'ti mameti so'rjuna ॥ 9

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna ! यः *yah :* who, एवम् *evam :* thus, मे *me :* My, दिव्यम् *divyam :* divine, जन्म *Janma :* birth, कर्मच *karma cha :* and work, तत्त्वतः *tattvatah :* in its essence, वेत्ति *vetti :* knows, सः *sah :* he, देहम् *deham :* the body, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* having abandoned, पुनः *punah :* again, जन्म *janma :* birth, नएति *na eti :* does not get, माम् *mam :* to me, एति *eti :* comes.

Substance : O Arjuna! He who thus knows My divine birth and work in its essence, having abandoned the body, is not born again; to Me he comes.

Commentary : The essence of the *Upanishadic* declaration *Brahmavit Brahmaiva bhavati* is re-stated in this verse. One who knows Brahman becomes that. Between knowing and becoming, there is no distinction in *Brahmavidya.* It is different in the objective world; there the knower and the knowee are different. But in the realm of the Self, knowing and becoming are one. In other words, only he who knows Him becomes Brahman. But what is this knowing of Brahman ? It is certainly not an intellectual conclusion, drawn by logic and argument from a study of the *Sastras.* One may be convinced by logical argument that Brahman alone is real, and yet he may be far far away from realising Him. This is not knowledge of Brahman. Knowing Brahman means direct experience of *Atma* which is beyond the body, senses, mind and intellect. This is to know Brahman in the essence (*Tattvatah*).

In this verse, the Lord states that he who knows the essential principle of His divine birth and action enters Him and has no further birth. By deep meditation and ecstasy of devotion, man becomes one with the Lord. To know the nature of the Lord is *Sadhana,* and to become one with Him is *Sadhya.* The first is practice the second the goal. One must

know Him *Tattvatah* (i. e.) by impersonal realisation according to the injunctions of the *Sastras.*

Divine : The life and work of the Lord are divine and they cannot be compared with those of mortal beings. The Lord is the master of *Maya,* whereas all mortals are enslaved by *Maya.* Their birth and action are controlled by *Maya.* On the other hand, the Lord controls *Maya* and acts in His own state of supreme perfection. The man who is able to understand the mystery unites himself with the Lord and has no need to go through the cycle of birth and death. It shows that birthlessness is not a negative state of emptiness or nothingness, but the positive state of perfection and blessedness. The doubt that the ultimate state can only be a state of nothingness is common to many people. Being habituated to confuse life with the operations of the body, senses and mind, man is not able to conceive a state beyond these planes. But it is made clear here that unity with the Lord comprehends life at all levels and in all planes of existence and is infinitely more beyond.

Having abandoned the body : One should note that abandoning the body is not a pre-condition of realisation. Even when the physical body remains, if man comes to know by meditation and devotion the ultimate mystery of the Lord, he becomes free from *Samsara,* the cycle of birth and death. What is here mentioned is only to affirm that there is no more birth for the knower of the Lord.

Question : *Who attains union with the Lord ?*

Answer : He who knows the mystery of the birth and work of the Lord in its essence attains union with Him.

Many wise men thus attained liberation.

10. वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ १०

Vita raga bhaya krodha manmaya mamupasritah ।
bahavo jnana tapasa puta madbhavamagatah ॥ 10

Meaning : वीतरागभयक्रोधाः *vitaragabhayakrodhah :* free from desire, fear and hatred, मन्मयाः *manmayah :* absorbed in me, मामुपाश्रिताः *mamupasritah :* taking refuge in me, बहवः *bahavah :* many, ज्ञानतपसा *jnanatapasa :* by the penance of knowledge, पूताः *putah :* purified, मद्भावम् *madbhavam :* My Being, आगताः *agatah :* have attained.

Substance : Free from desire, fear and hatred, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, many purified by the penance of knowledge have attained Me.

Commentary : In this Discourse, the Lord describes the merits of *Jnana* in different ways, as *Tapas, Yajna, Agni, Nauka* and *Khadga.* Here *Jnana* is described as *tapas,* a penance of wonderful merit, because it cleanses all accumulated sins of previous births and all the impurities of inherited instincts, impulses and tendencies. Such men who are purified by this penance are mentioned as purified (*Putah*). What are the marks of this *Jnana tapas* ? Freedom from desire, fear and hatred, intense devotion and absorption in the Lord, seeking ultimate refuge in Him, – these are the aspects of *Jnana tapas.* What is its effect ? Attaining the Lord, Self-realisation through purity is the reward.

Free from desire, fear and hatred : Attachment to worldly objects, fear and hatred, form the triple-headed monster who should be killed and destroyed. Is it an easy task ? How to destroy them ? The Lord points the way. He says, 'think of me, be absolved in me, take refuge in me.' That is the way to conquer the enemy. As man acquires greater and greater firmness in *Jnana,* these obstacles are gradually cleared from the mind, and that very moment when the mind is destroyed, the supreme Self is realised. When the mind ceases to exist, Self is realised, and when Self is realised, mind ceases to exist. So one should practice the two aspects of *Jnana* simultaneously.

Many : The Lord produces direct evidence by showing that many aspirants have attained Him by *Jnana tapas,* having

purified their minds. What has been possible in the past should be possible in the present and the future. The aspirants should therefore follow this spiritual *sadhana* and attain the goal. The main points of the verse are given below–

1. Purity of mind is indispensable for God-realisation.
2. To achieve mental purity, *Jnana tapas* is necessary.
3. *Jnana tapas* implies freedom from desire, fear and hatred, absorption in the contemplation of the Divine, and taking refuge in the Lord.

11. ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ११

Ye yatha mam prapadyante
tam stathai'va bhajamyaham ।
mama vartma'nuvartante
manushyah partha sarvasah ॥ 11

Meaning : पार्थ *Partha :* O Arjuna ! ये *ye :* who, यथा *yatha :* in what–so–ever manner, माम् *mam :* Me, प्रपद्यन्ते *prapadyante :* approach, तान् *tam :* them, तथैव *tatha eva :* in that way only, अहम् *aham :* I, भजामि *bhajami :* (I) reward, मनुष्याः *manushyah :* men, मम *mama :* My, वर्त्म *vartma :* path, सर्वशः *sarvasah :* in all ways, अनुवर्तन्ते *anuvartante :* follow.

Substance : O Arjuna ! In whatever way men approach Me, even so do I reward them, for the path that men may take from every side is Mine.

Commentary : The Lord declares here that the reward for men who worship Him would be strictly in relation to the aim and object of their worship. The purpose of devotion, its method and manner, and its intensity would determine the nature of the reward. God is like the wish–yielding plant of Paradise. What man wishes to obtain, that the Lord gives. The man who

is suffering from bodily pain prays to be relieved of that pain, and the pain is relieved. The poor man wishes for wealth and prosperity, and God gives him these worldly benefits. The devotee yearns for the devotion and he gets that. The *Jnani* seeks for liberation and he attains *Moksha.* This is to say that different types of persons share the grace of God in different ways each according to his own *samskaras.* If men seek for perishable worldly things, they get only those things and not *Moksha.* When we approach God, we should clearly know what we should seek for. It would be absurd for a man to approach an Emperor and ask for a few vegetables. How foolish then would it be to approach God for worldly pleasures and enjoyments, instead of true knowledge and devotion ! The wind of God's grace is blowing every where and at all times. Let us keep the sails unfurled to catch the friendly breeze and make rapid progress in life's voyage to the heaven of peace, light and blessedness. The lazy and ignorant sailors remain where they are, for they do not know that the wind of God's grace is all-pervading and ever ready to help and guide all mankind.

It should be understood that mere wishful thinking of spiritual aims does not take a man far in that path. The responsibility is mainly on man. How he progresses and to what end and with what purpose he strives will determine his progress.

Follow my path : In every way men are treading the path that leads to God. Even a rank materialist who prays for the gratification of material demands, is also treading the path to God. For, after some time, he would realise the fleeting nature and futility of earthly pleasures, and then his devotion to God would take an upward turn. He would then seek for knowledge, and thus attains the goal. So all men are moving towards the Lord though they follow different paths. What is needed is faith in the Lord. *Karma*, *Bhakti*, *Dhyana* and *Jnana* are all different paths leading to the Lord.

The Load explains why people worship other Devas :

12. काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ १२

Kankshantah karmanam siddhim yajanta iha devatah ।
kshipram hi manushe loke siddhir bhavati karmaja ॥ 12

Meaning: कर्मणाम् *karmanam* : of actions, सिद्धिम् *siddhim* : success, काङ्क्षन्तः *kankshantah* : men longing for, इह *iha* : in this world, देवताः *devatah* : the Devas (Indra, Varuna, etc.) यजन्तः *yajantah* : after sacrifice to, हि *hi* : because, कर्मजा *karmaja* : born of action, सिद्धिः *siddhih* : success, मानुषेलोके *manushe loke* : in the world of men, क्षिप्रम् *kshipram* : quickly, भवति *bhavati* : is attained.

Substance : Men longing for success of their works sacrifice to the Gods, because in this world of men, success born of action is quickly attained.

Commentary : The Lord declares that in this world success is quickly attained by man for the work that he does. So men worship the *Devas* like *Indra*, *Varuna* etc. and offer sacrifices to them, and the fruits of such works are quickly attained and enjoyed. All the other worlds are places of enjoyment resulting from the work done here. The earth is the world of action (*Karma Bhumi*) for good or evil. Men attain Heaven or Hell according to the good or evil done by them in this world. When that experience is over, they take birth once again in this world. So this is the centre for spiritual realisation. Let all the seekers take to good work, purify their minds, and attain Knowledge.

If the sick man does not cure himself where there is medicine for his disease, what can he do when he goes to a place where there is no medicine ? So the wise man should undertake some form of spiritual discipline in this world and attain liberation from the disease of birth and death.

The Lord declares that though He acts He is not bound by Karma.

13. चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ १३

Chaturvarnyam maya sritstam gunakarma vibhagasah ।
tasya kartaramapi mam viddhyakartara mavyayam ॥ 13

Meaning : चातुर्वर्ण्यम् *chaturvarnyam :* the fourfold caste, गुणकर्मविभागशः *gunakarma vibhagasah :* according to the differentiation of qualities and functions, मया *maya :* by Me, सृष्टम् *srishtam :* has been created, तस्य *tasya :* of it, कर्तारमपि *kartaram api :* though the author, माम् *mam :* Me, अकर्तारम् *akartaram :* non-doer, अव्ययम् *avyayam :* eternal, विद्धि *viddhi :* know.

Substance : The four-fold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of qualities and functions; though I am its author, know Me as non-doer, eternal.

Commentary : The following table shows the caste system as it was planned by the Lord.

	Quality.	*Caste.*	*Functions.*
1.	Sattva	Brahmins	Tapas and self-control.
2.	Rajas	Kshatriyas	Domination, war, Kingship.
3.	Rajas+Tamas	Vysyas	Trade and Commerce.
4.	Tamas	Sudras	Labour and Service.

Though the Lord is the Creator and sustainer of the world and human functions yet He remains detached and unaffected by His work. This is the mystery of the Lord's action in the universe. Many a great man who came into the world and who worked for the good of humanity have done so without any feeling of personal agency in his work. That is the way how work should be done, and men who work in that spirit are not bound by the wheel of *Karma.*

14. न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ १४

Na mam karmani limpanti na me karmaphale spriha ।
iti mam yo 'bhijanati karmabhir na sa badhyate ॥ 14

Meaning : माम् *mam :* Me, कर्माणि *karmani :* actions, न लिम्पन्ति *na limpanti :* do not taint, मे *me :* to Me, कर्मफले *karmaphale :* in the fruit of actions, स्पृहा *spriha :* desire, न *na :* no, इति *iti :* thus, माम् *mam :* Me, यः *yah :* who, अभिजानाति *abhijanati :* knows well, सः *sah :* he, कर्मभिः *karmabhih :* by actions, न बध्यते *na badhyate :* is not bound.

Substance : Actions do not taint Me, nor have I desire for the fruit of actions; He who knows Me thus is not bound by *karma.*

Commentary : The Lord is Himself the greatest example of a *Karma Yogi.* He is every moment engaged in infinite work in the infinite universe. And yet, He is not tainted by anything because He is free from the desire for the fruit of actions. The seeker should try to understand the supreme unattachment of the Lord in the tremendous work going on all around Him. One who does understand this mystery becomes free from the bondage of *karma* like the Lord Himself.

The wise men of the past have done work with that knowledge.

14. एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ १५

Evam jnatva kritam karma purvairapi mumukshubhih ।
kuru karmai'va tasmat tvam purvaih purvataram kritam ॥ 15

Meaning : एवम् *evam :* thus, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva :* knowing, पूर्वैः *purvaih :* by ancients, मुमुक्षुभिः अपि *mumukshubhih api :* aspirants for liberation also, कर्म *karma :* work, कृतम् *kritam:* was done, तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, त्वम् *tvam :* you, पूर्वैः *purviah :* by ancients, कृतम् *kritam :* done, पूर्वतरम् *purvataram :* in olden times, कर्म एव *karma eva :* action only (nishkama karma), कुरु *kuru :* do.

Substance : Thus knowing, the ancient spiritual aspirants performed action. Therefore you shall do the same (desireless) action as performed by the ancients in older times.

Commentary : *Nishkama karma* is the very foundation of spiritual life and the open gateway to final liberation. The mighty structure of Self-realisation is based on this wonderful and ancient law. Therefore the Lord exhorts Arjuna to follow the example set by the ancient sages who performed magnificient work for the benefit of humanity, without the least idea of doership or personal attachment. This law of *nishkama karma* is therefore not a new path or novel doctrine. It is a very ancient principle of spiritual life, and Lord Krishna reassures the modern generations that the law holds good for all times. This path is still open to all people without distinction of caste and creed, and it is within the reach of the common man, and leads to the highest good.

The method of Nishkama Karma is explained in the course of fifteen verses.

16. किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६

Kim karma kim akarme'ti kavayo'pyatra mohitah ।
tatte karma pravakshyami yajjnatva mokshyase asubhat ॥ 16

Meaning : कर्म *karma :* action, किम् *kim :* what, अकर्म *akarma :* not action, किम् *kim :* what, इति अत्र *iti atra :* thus, in this matter, कवयः अपि *kavayah api :* the wise also, मोहिताः *mohitah :* are deluded, यत् *yat :* which, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva :* knowing, अशुभात् *asubhat :* from evil, मोक्ष्यसे *mokshyase :* you shall be liberated, तत् कर्म *tat karma :* that action, ते *te :* to you, प्रवक्ष्यामि *pravakshyami :* I will teach.

Substance : What is action, what is not action? In this matter even the wise are deluded. I will teach you that action knowing which you shall be liberated from evil.

Commentary : Right action is a subtle law which even the wise and the learned are not able to understand. So the Lord out of compassion for humanity begins to explain the secret of *Nishkama Karma.* It is only by knowing it that man can free himself from the bondage of evil. By wrong action man binds himself to endless *samsara.* By right action, he attains freedom. So it is necessary for all to understand the law of *karma.*

Question : *What is the way to free oneself from evil ?*

Answer : To know what is action and what is not action is the way to transcend evil.

Karma, akarma, vikarma, should be properly understood.

17. कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७

Karmano hyapi boddhavyam
boddhavyam cha vikarmanah ।
akarmanascha boddhavyam
gahana karmano gatih ॥ 17

Meaning : कर्मणः अपि *karmanah api :* also of action enjoined by the Sastras, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam :* (the nature) should be known, विकर्मणश्च *vikarmanah cha :* and of prohibited action, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam :* (the nature) should be known, अकर्मणश्च *akarmanah cha :* and of inaction, बोद्धव्यम् *boddhavyam:* (the nature) should be known, हि *hi :* because, कर्मणः *karmanah:* of action, गतिः *gatih :* the path, गहना *gahana :* (is) deep, difficult to understand.

Substance : The nature of action (enjoined by the *Sastras*) and of wrong action (prohibited by the *Sastras*) and also of inaction should be known, because deep and difficult to understand is the path of action.

Commentary : (1) *karma :* that which should be done according to the sastras (*vihita karma*),

(2) *vikarma* : that which is prohibited by the sastras (*nishiddha karma*),

(3) *akarma* : inaction, idleness, non-performance of any work.

Another interpretation could also be given to these terms :

(1) *karma* : ordinary action in the daily duties of life,

(2) *vikarma* : doing the same work without personal attachment and in a spirit of dedication to the Lord,

(3) *akarma* : the resulting state of purity and complete absorption in the Self when there is no action at all.

So the nature of *karma* has an unfathomable mystery behind it. To understand it clearly and practise it is the way to liberation.

The Lord propounds the method of action.

18. कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८

Karmanyakarmayah pasyed akarmani cha karmayah ।
sa buddhiman manushyeshu sa yuktah kritsnakarmakrit ॥ 18

Meaning : कर्मणि *karmani :* in action, अकर्म *akarma :* no action (inaction), यः *yah :* who, पश्येत् *pasyet :* sees, अकर्मणि च *akarmani cha :* and in no action (in inaction), पश्येत् *pasyet :* sees, कर्म *karma :* action, यः *yah :* who, सः *sah :* he, मनुष्येषु *manushyeshu :* among men, बुद्धिमान् *buddhiman :* wise man, सः *sah :* he, युक्तः *yuktah :* the harmonised, कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् *kristnakarmakrit :* doer of all action.

Substance : Who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, he is the wise man, the yogi, the doer of all actions, among men.

Commentary : *No action in action* : If a man learns to work without the feeling of doership and without desire to enjoy the fruits thereof, he attains complete freedom. Any kind of work, and any amount of it, cannot bind him. So what he does amounts to no action or inaction, just because he knows that he is not doing anything at all, but that the bodily and mental organs and instruments are functioning according to their nature in their own fields of activity. Let us take the illustration of a mirror. Various objects and various forms of action are reflected in it constantly, and yet the mirror is not tainted in any way; it remains clear and pure. Even so, the *Jnani* knows that he is the all-pervading Self and in that Self all actions of the universe are taking place just like those reflected in the mirror. Thus we find that several sages and great men have done great good to mankind through detached and desireless action. Their action, from this point of view, is no action at all so far as they are concerned, as they have entered the Self-state beyond the physical and mental planes. The ignorant man may attribute action to him because he is confused and does not know the secret which the *Jnani* understands in all the actions. It is this philosophical position which is stated in this apparently paradoxical sentence.

Action in no action : Exactly opposite to these wise men are the idlers who apparently do not do any work but are constantly in a state of action. The idlers refuse to do any work; they are too lazy or too weak in body to perform any work. They may pose as philosophers and *Jnanis* because their bodily and sense organs are not engaged in any work. But they are always in a state of action because their minds wander about all over the world, think and perform a thousand forms of work, and they live a restless and tortured life. The inherent *samskaras* play havoc with their mind stuff which is the root cause of *samsara*, birth and death. They have not arrived at that state of peace and restfulness which belongs to the highest realm of

the Self. The Lord warns the seeker not to fall into this horrible error. Otherwise man does the greatest injury to himself by confounding the positive peace of self-realisation with the negative state of inaction of the body which is the same as death. He should understand that detachment is a mental attitude born of knowledge and not merely cessation of work. It is not action that binds but egotism and the past evil tendencies of the mind. The body is after all an external instrument. The operator is the mind. It is here that detachment should be cultivated. To restrain the sense-organs and go on thinking of sense pleasures and enjoyments with the mind, is *'midhyachara'* and the Lord has already condemned such men in the Discourse on *Karma yoga*. The same idea is presented here in a different context.

So, the realised man, whether he is working or not working enjoys the supreme peace of the Self. He gets the highest reward of performing all the good works enjoined by the *Sastras*. He is rooted in the Self in action and in inaction. For such a man action is no action.

The Lord eulogises the sage who has attained this state as *'buddhiman'*, *'yuktah'* and *'kristnakarmakrit'*. By following the path of *nishkama karma*, he has purified his mind and attained the Atmic state and by that he has achieved the highest goal of life. For such a man, there is nothing more to do, and therefore he is said to have performed all the works enjoined by the *Sastras* (*kristnakarmakrit*).

Question : *Who is the wise man ?*

Answer : One who sees action in no action and no action in action is the wise man.

Question : *What is the fruit of his wisdom ?*

Answer : He attains Self-realisation, and so he gets the merit of having performed all the works enjoined by the *Sastras*.

The greatness of the Karmayogi is described in five verses.

19. यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ १९

Yasya sarve samarambhah kamasamkalpavarjitah ।
jnanagnidagdhakarmanam tam ahuh panditam budhah ॥

Meaning : यस्य *yasya :* whose, सर्वे *sarve :* all, समारम्भाः *samarambhah :* undertakings, कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः *kamasamkalpavarjitah :* free from desire and volition, ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणम् *jnanagnidagdhakarmanam :* whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, तम् *tam :* him, पण्डितम् *panditam :* a sage, बुधाः *budhah :* the wise, आहुः *ahuh :* call.

Substance : He whose undertakings are all free from desire and volition, whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge, is called a sage by the wise.

Commentary : From the spiritual point of view, a Pandit is one who has freed himself from desire and volition in performing all practical work in the world. Book-learning, intellectual gymnastics may dazzle the minds of the ignorant, but the all-knowing Lord does not care for such barren learning, and the title Pandit is given only to the sage who can act without desire and egotism and whose actions are burnt in the fire of Self-knowledge.

Free from desire and volition : *'Kama'* means desire for enjoyment, *'samkalpa'* means thought arising from egotism, which expresses itself in statements like "I will fight, I will acquire wealth and fame" and so on. Even thoughts like – "I will help mankind – I will do good to society" pertain to the ego and come under the category of *'samkalpa'*. The wise man works without such personal motive. He has understood the mystery of his real Self, and so when he acts, the action is thought of and executed by higher power than himself through the instrumentality of his vehicle (*upadhi*). He feels no personal responsibility at all. It is in this way that the greatest works are performed by rare men from time to time.

The doubt may arise whether any action is possible without *'samkalpa'*. The Lord clears the doubt and

emphatically declares that work is possible without '*samkalpa*', in the sense that man acts like an instrument in the hands of a higher power than himself. The human agent is a visible agent of action. (*Nimithamatram*) whereas the real power that does every thing is the Lord Himself.

Whose actions are burnt in the fire of knowledge: The fire of *Atmajnana* burns up the whole heap of *karma* accummulated through several births, as soft cotton is burnt to ashes by a spark of fire. Such is the power of Self-Knowledge. The man who attains it is freed from the bondage of *karma* for ever. There is no further birth and death for him. There is no going to this or that heaven. The endless peregrination from one world to another comes to an end. He remains established in the Self-state. It is towards this consummation that man is striving. *Nishkamakarma* purifies the mind, and when the mind is purified, that ideal of Self-realisation is obtained.

Question: *Who is a Pandit?*

Answer : He whose actions are free from desire and egotism, whose actions are burnt up in the fire of Knowledge, is a Pandit.

Question: *How should action be performed?*

Answer : Without egotism and desire.

Question *By what is karma destroyed?*

Answer : By Self-Knowledge.

20. त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ २०

Tyktva karmaphalasangam nityatripto nirasrayah ।
karmanyabhipravritto'pi naiva kimchit karoti sah ॥ 20

Meaning: कर्मफलासङ्गम् *karmaphalasangam* : attachment to the fruits of action. त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having given up, नित्यतृप्तः *nityatriptah* : ever content, निराश्रयः *nirasrayah* : not

depending on anything, कर्मणि *karmani* : in work, अभिप्रवृत्तः अपि *abhipravrittah api* : though engaged, सः *sah* : he, किञ्चित् *kinchit* : anything, न करोत्येव *karoti eva* : does not verily.

Substance: He who has given up attachment to the fruits of work, who is ever content, who does not depend upon anything, though engaged in action does not verily do anything.

Commentary: The state of the *Jivanmukta* is described here (1) He has abandoned all attachment for the fruits of work. (2) He is eternally satisfied in the Self. (3) He does not depend upon anything (i. e. *Atma* alone is his sole refuge). Such a man, though he is deeply engaged in a thousand activities, is really not doing anything at all. Several sages and Mahatmas have done immortal work for the good of humanity in that spirit.

They are not attached to the fruits of work, because they have surrendered everything to the Lord. They are ever content because they experience the bliss of the Self beyond which there is no delight any where at all. Their content is not conditioned by time, place, and circumstances and therefore they are ever content '*nityatriptah*'. The ignorant man is always seeking refuge in this or that material object, because the gross mind can only exist by clinging to such gross objects however wretched they might be. Without such prop, he connot live. That is why man clings to objects in spite of all the suffering that they cause both by possession and non-possession. The wise man, on the other hand has found his abode of peace in *Atma*, and never falls down to the plane of matter though he lives in a physical body. For such a man action is no action. Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to find that state and live in it, while carrying out all the duties which he is called upon to perform by his earthly position as a human being.

Question: ***Who is the person who does no action while engaged in work?***

Answer : **The man who is not attached to the fruits of work, ever content, depending on nothing, though he acts, does not do any thing.**

The qualities of the man who while working with the body is not tainted by sin, are described.

21. निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१

Nirasiryatachittatma tyakta sarva parigrahah ।
sariram kevalam karma kurvannapnoti kilbisham । 2

Meaning : निराशीः *nirasih :* he who is free from hope, यतचित्तात्मा *yatachittatma :* who is Self-controlled, त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः *tyaktasarvaparigrahah :* who has abandoned all possessions, शारीरं केवलं कर्म *sariram kevalam karma :* action merely with the body, कुर्वन् *kurvan :* doing, किल्बिषम् *kilbisham :* sin, न आप्नोति *na apnoti :* does not get.

Substance : He who is free from hope, who is self-controlled, who has abandoned all possessions, though working merely with the body, does not get sin.

Commentary : Three attributes of the *Jivanmukta* are mentioned here- (1) desireless, (2) self-controlled (3) abandoning all possessions. The man who has no desire to enjoy the pleasures of the objective world has his mind turned inwards in the contemplation of *Atma.* He finds all happiness there. So even though he works he cannot have any attachment for the fruits of works. Self-control leads to *Atmajnana.* When the senses and the mind are restrained, naturally the man becomes free from the enticing temptations of the material world with all its glamour and attraction. When such a man works, he has no feeling of attachment for any material object at all. The third attribute '*aparigraha*' should be carefully noted by the aspirant. Non-receiving of gifts and possessions is enjoined by the *Sastras* as a very important discipline for the seeker. When one receives gifts from others he takes with them part of the *karma* of the giver. The very purpose of the seeker (i. e.) to get rid of *Karma* is defeated. Why should he add to his own load the sins of others by receiving worthless possessions of material things?

Non-receiving (*Aparigraha*) is therefore enjoined as the rule of conduct for all spiritual aspirants.

The man who while acting is not bound by action is described.

22. यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२

Yadriccha labha samtusto dvandvatito vimatsarah ।
samah siddhavasiddhau cha kritva'pi na nibadhyate ॥ 22

Meaning : यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टः *yadricchalabhasantushtah :* content with whatsoever he obtained without effort, द्वन्द्वातीतः *dvandvatitah :* transcending the pairs of opposites, विमत्सरः *vimatsarah :* free from malice, सिद्धौ *siddhau :* in success, असिद्धौच *asiddhau cha :* and in failure, समः *samah :* equal, कृत्वापि *kritva api :* acting even, न *na :* (is) not, निबध्यते *nibadhyate :* bound.

Substance : Content with whatsoever he gets without efforts, free from the pains of opposites, free from malice, balanced in success and failure, though acting,he is not bound.

Commentary : Further attributes of the *Karma yogi* are mentioned here. He is thoroughly contented with what he obtains without any special effort on his part. He is not effected by the pains of opposites, like heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. He is free from malice towards any being in the world. He is equal-minded in success and failure. These qualities distinguish the *Jivanmukta* and the perfect *Karma yogi.*

Work and wisdom, knowledge and action, are inter-dependent. It is only the man of knowledge who can be a perfect *Karma yogi.* Unless one acquires the knowledge of the Self, it is impossible to work without attachment, to go beyond the pairs of opposites, and to be free from evil of malice. Thus the *Jnani* who is acting in the world is not bound by *karma.* How is this knowledge of Self to be attained? Unless a man

undertakes selfless, desireless work, he cannot obtain purity of mind, and unless the mind is purified of all its evil tendencies of '*raga and dvesha*', he cannot realise *Atma*. So these two aspects go together in the spiritual progress of man towards perfection. That is the reason why at the end of the Third Discourse on *Karma yoga*, the Lord declares the perfection of Self-realisation, and here in *Jnana yoga*, the secret of *Karma yoga* is emphasised prominently.

The *Jnani* is in a state of absorption in the Self, and so what he does with the bodily vehicle cannot bind him. He knows clearly that he has nothing to gain or lose by action or inaction, because he is united with *Brahman*. As long as the body lasts, its maintainance is carried on automatically without any *samkalpa* on his part. In this way the bodily vehicle and the mental instruments are used for the good of humanity without egotism or any sense of personal doership. Such a man is not bound by what he does.

Question : *Who is not bound by action while wroking ?*

Answer : One who is contended with what he obtains without effort, who is not affected by the pairs of opposites, who is free from envy and who is equal-minded in success and failure, is not bound by what he does.

23. गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३

Gata sangasya muktasya jnanavasthitachetasah ।
yajnaya 'charatah karma samagram praviliyate ॥ 23

Meaning : गतसङ्गस्य *gatasangasya :* of one who is devoid of attachment, मुक्तस्य *muktasya :* of the liberated (from the bondage of attraction and repulsion and of desire and anger); ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः *jnanavasthitachetasah :* whose mind is established in knowledge, यज्ञाय *yajnaya :* for sacrifice (to worship God, to do good to others, or to maintain Dharma); आचरतः *acharatah :* acting, कर्म *karma :* action, समग्रं *samagram:* whole, प्रविलीयते *praviliyate :* is dissolved.

Substance : Of the man who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, the whole action performed in the spirit of sacrifice is dissolved.

Commentary : The essential qualities of the man of Knowledge are described here (1) Non-attachement, (2) freedom from desire and hatred, attraction and repulsion, (3) absorption in *Atma*, (4) performing work in a spirit of sacrifice. The *karma* of the sage who possesses these qualities is entirely dissolved.

Whose mind is established in Knowledge : The mind of the sage is established in Knowledge. Such Knowledge is the result of non-attachment to the fruits of work, and liberation from agitations of desire and hatred. For such a man, though he is engaged in a thousand actions, all that he does is totally dissolved in the ocean of Knowledge. So it is clear that Knowledge of Self is the only way to cut the bonds of *karma*. Without true Knowledge man is inevitably bound to the material world through his unrestrained senses and mind and what he does is motivated by desire and egotism, and so he binds himself to the wheel of *samsara*. This bondage is the creation of man's own mind and is not the effect of the objective world. In fact the objective world exists as it is, and man attaches himself to it by his past *samskaras* and suffers the unavoidable consequences of birth and death. The sage has discovered the original freedom of his own Self and so he has released himself from the enslaving forces of the senses and the mind. Such a man is not bound by *karma*, because there is no desire for personal enjoyment and there is no feeling of doership. His work is thus dissolved in Knowledge.

Performed in the spirit of sacrifice : In the Third Discourse, it has already been stated that work done with any other motive except as dedicated to the Lord, as *Dharma* or as service to humanity, will cause bondage.

Is dissolved : It is emphatically stated here that nothing remains of *karma* for the man who has realised Brahman. *Sanchita* and *Agami karma* are destroyed in the fire of Knowledge. Only *Prarabdha* remains as long as the body lasts, and when the body falls, it is all over. There is no mind, no *karma* to lead to further births.

These ideas are a source of great thought for the man of action, the devotee, and the aspirant for liberation. All these are seeking for emancipation from the bondage of *karma*. And the message of the Gita is not the abandoning of action but the freedom of man through right action. The secret is revealed how man should work and yet remain free from being caught in the meshes of *karma*.

Different forms of yajna are explained in the following seven verses.

24. ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ २४

Brahma'rpanam brahma havir
brahmagnau brahmana hutam ।
brahmai'va tena gantavyam
brahmakarma samadhina ॥ 24

Meaning : अर्पणम् *arpanam* : the oblation (ghee, chips of wood offered to the God of Fire in yajna), ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman (the Supreme Being), हविः *havih* : clarified butter, cooked rice etc. ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, ब्रह्मग्नौ *brahmagnau* : in the fire of Brahman, ब्रह्मणा *brahmana* : by Brahman, हुतम् *hutam* : is offered, ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना *brahmakarmasamadhina* : by absorption in action which is Brahman, तेन *tena* : by him, गन्तव्यम् *gantavyam* : shall be reached, ब्रह्मएव *brahma eva* : only Brahman.

Substance : The oblation is Brahman, the offerings are Brahman, the sacrifice is Brahman, and by absorption in action which is Brahman, Brahman alone shall be reached by him (by the sacrifice).

Commentary : Everything in the *yajna* is Brahman. The verse enunciates the Upanishadic truth –

All this is Brahman–*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*
(Chandogya iii–14–1).

Keeping this truth in mind one should work; *yajna* is *Brahman* in every part and in all its details.

If all this – the whole universe with all the beings in it and all the actions taking place in it – is *Brahman*, the One Reality without a second, why and wherefore the manifoldness? Name and form (*nama* and *rupa*) have super–imposed the diversity on the supreme secondless Brahman. What is super–imposed cannot change the nature of the orginal substance. The snake that is super–imposed on the rope out of delusion of the eye cannot change the nature of the rope. The rope remains the rope even when the snake is super–imposed on it by the illusion of the eye. When the illusion passes away by focussing the light on the object, the rope is seen and known as the rope. So, all the time what existed was the rope only and nothing else. Even so, the world of name and form has been super–imposed by the delusion of the mind and the senses on the supreme Brahman. When the delusion is cleared and the mind is purified, all this shall be seen and known as Brahman. The sage knows the truth. Everything that we see, feel, and think, and every action of ours is Brahman and nothing exists other than Brahman. It is this fundamental truth that is affirmed in this verse by the illustration af *yajna*. The oblation is Brahman. The material used is Brahman. The fire is Brahman. The sacrifice is Brahman. The act of sacrifice is Brahman. Thus contemplating, man realises Brahman every where and in all things.

Yajna is taken as illustration because at the end of *Dvaparayuga*, sacrifices were performed elaborately by all people and they were familiar with the rites and rituals. The principle is applicable to everything and every action that man does. He is blessed who acts in the understanding and experience of the truth that all is Brahman.

By absorption : Here the technique of transforming all work into Brahman is indicated. By concentration and meditation, by constant absorption in Brahman, every kind of work that is done melts into Brahman. Work then loses its separate limited quality, its binding power. It acquires a divine and spiritual quality.

The distinction between *karma* and *Jnana* is thus eliminated, and Brahman alone is realised in all that one thinks and does. The seeker should understand the importance of this verse which shows the direct path to *Brahmajnana*. Any man in any work of life doing any kind of work can practice this method and reach the goal. There is a tradition among people to repeat this verse while taking food. The food is Brahman, the feeder is Brahman, the act of eating is Brahman. It is again an affirmation that everything and every act is That, appearing to be manifold by the super-imposition of name and form.

Different forms of yajna are described.

25. दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥ २५

Daivameva'pare yajnam yoginah paryupasate ।
brahmagnavapare yajnam yajnenai'vo'pajuhvati ॥ 25

Meaning : अपरे *apare* : some, योगिनः *yoginah* : yogis, दैवम् *daivam* : pertaining to the God, यज्ञम् एव *yajnam eva* : sacrifice only, पर्युपासते *paryupasate* : perform, अपरे *apare* : some, यज्ञेन एव *yajnena eva* : by union of jiva with Brahman only, यज्ञम् *yajnam* : the jiva (the individual ego), ब्रह्माग्नौ *brahmagnau* : in the fire of Brahman, उपजुह्वति *upajuhvati* : offer as sacrifice.

Substance : Some *yogis* perform sacrifice pertaining to the Gods only, others by union of the self (*jiva*) with Brahman, offer the *Jiva* as sacrifice in the fire of Brahman.

Commentary : The Lord explains the different types and forms of *yajna*. (1) Some *yogis* perform sacrifice to the Gods.

They worship different Gods, meditate on them, pray to them and in many ways please the Gods. They may be termed *Karmayogis* or *Bhaktiyogis*.

(2) Others perform sacrifice to Brahman by offering his separate individuality (*jiva*) as oblation in the fire of Brahman. Fire consumes every thing and converts all into its own element. Similarly the whole of the objective world melts into Brahman. The mind and ego are also objective phenomenon pertaining to the inner nature of man. So the *yogis* offer them as oblation in the fire of Brahman (i. e.) they are absorbed into Brahman and lose their separate limited personalities. There are the *Jnanayogis*. This sacrifice leads to identity with Brahman ultimately. By inquiring into the real nature of man, by indisposition towards the objects of the world, by the eradication of bad *samskaras*, the mind which keeps up the illusion of duality is so purified that it is merged in Brahman. This is the liberated state of the *Jnanayogi*. This is *Brahmajnana*.

23. श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥ २६

Srotradini'ndriyanyanye samyamagnishu juhvati ।
sabdadin vishayananya indriyagnishu juhvati ॥ 26

Meaning : अन्ये *anye* : others, श्रोत्रादीनि *srotradini* : organs of hearing and others, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani* : senses, संयमाग्निषु *samyamagnishu* : in the fire of restraint, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice, अन्ये *anye* : others, शब्दादीन् *sabdadin* : sound and others, विषयान् *vishayan* : sense-objects, इन्द्रियाग्निषु, *indriyagnishu* : in the fire of the senses, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice.

Substance : Others sacrifice the senses like the organ of hearing etc. in the fires of sense-restraint, and some others sacrifice the sense-objects like sound etc. in the fire of the senses.

Commentary : Here two types of *yajna* are mentioned—

(1) restraining the senses (2) rejecting the sense-objects.

Sense-restraint is the key to *Brahmajnana*, and so the Lord insists on this discipline many times in the Gita.

So, sense control is the first of all spiritual disciplines· Vedantic perorations without sense control do not have either light or power in them. The man of sense-control, though he does not talk anything, communicates vedantic truth to the ends of the world even without one spoken word. The sense-control is here mentioned as a sacrifice. Liberation can be attained only by mind-control, and this depends on sense-restraint. By practising several kinds of penance, by following several vows, rules and regulations of conduct, the seeker should get the senses under control. This is what is meant by sacrificing the senses in the fire of restraint. The plural form 'fires' is used because there are different senses to be controlled.

The second *yajna* mentioned here is closely related to the first. The senses, according to their nature, wander about freely in the objective world, experiencing pleasure and pain through pleasant and unpleasant objects. Therefore one has to reject the sense-objects by deeply examining them and understanding how painful and worthless they are. When one realises the worthlessness and shadowy nature of these sense-objects, the senses do not run after them. They remain steadfast in their own seats. It is the rushing out of the senses towards material objects that disturbs the mind and throws it into a state of commotion. When the senses are kept in their place, the mind is calm and when the mind is calm, the bliss of *Atma* is experienced. This is sacrificing the sense-objects in the fire of the senses.

27. सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ २७

Sarvani'ndriyakarmani pranakarmani cha'pare ।
atmasamyama yogagnau juhvati jnanadipite ॥ 27

Meaning: अपरे *apare :* others, सर्वाणि *sarvani :* all, इन्द्रियकर्माणि *indriyakarmani :* functions of the senses, प्राणकर्माणिच *pranakarmani cha :* and functions of the *prana* (vital energy),

ज्ञानदीपिते *jnanadipite :* illumined by knowledge, आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ *atmasamyamayogagnau :* in the fire of the yoga of Self-control, जुह्वति *juhvati :* sacrifice.

Substance : Others sacrifice all the functions of the senses and the functions of the vital energy (*prana*) in the fire of the *yoga* of self-control, illumined by Knowledge.

Commentary : The mind is the barrier to Self-realisation. By its inherent *samskaras* acquired through several births, the mind has become a thick dark veil covering up the Reality and preventing the people from knowing their own real nature. To conquer the mind, various spiritual disciplines are necessary. Restraining the senses and controlling the breath are essential for mind-control. Otherwise the force of the senses and the ill-regulated health disturb the mind-stuff endlessly. So the seeker should gradually practise sense-restraint (*indriyanigraha*) and breath-regulation (*pranayama*). This idea is figuratively described as sacrificing the senses and the vital energy (*prana*) in the fire of self-control.

Illumined by Knowledge : *Jnana* is compared to light. By sense-control and self-control, the light of knowledge shines brightest. On the other side, by discrimination and knowledge of the Self, the mind is brought under control. Therefore it is here said that self-control is illumined by knowledge. The fire of self-control is fawned into flame by knowledge. It means that those who aspire for mind-control should practise discrimination and enquiry into the Self. The seeker has to carry on the enquiry – "what and whence this universe ? what is the reality behind all this ?" By such enquiry, the mind ceases to run after the transitory things of the objective world, and turn towards that which is the basis of all – *Atma*. It is evident from this epithet that the Atmic state is the absolute fulness of light, knowledge and bliss.

Question : *By what is self-control strengthened* ?

Answer : By spiritual enquiry and knowledge.

28. द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८

Dravyayajnastapoyajna yogayajnastatha 'pare ।
svadhyayajnanayajnascha yatayah samsita vratah । 28

Meaning : अपरे *apare :* others, द्रव्ययज्ञाः *dravyayajnah :* (those) who offer wealth as sacrifice, तपोयज्ञाः *tapoyajnah :* who offer austerity as sacrifice, योगयज्ञाः *yogayajnah :* who offer yoga as sacrifice, तथा *tatha :* again, स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाः च *svadhyaya-jnanayagnah cha :* and who offer study and knowledge as sacrifice, यतयः *yatayah :* ascetics, संशितव्रताः *samsitavratah:* men of rigid vows.

Substance : Others offer wealth, austerity and *Yoga* as sacrifice and again others, the ascetics of rigid vows offer study and knowledge as sacrifice.

Commentary : Some other forms of *Yajnas* are mentioned here :

1) *Dravyayajna* : Wealth offered to deserving persons (*dana*) and for benevolent purposes is considered as a form of sacrifice.

2) *Tapoyajna* : Subjecting the body and senses to severe austerities by vows of fasting and silence etc. is a form of sacrifice.

3) *Yogayajna* : Breath-control is a form of sacrifice.

4) *Svadhyayayajna* : The study and the recitation of the *Vedas* and other sacred texts is a form of sacrifice.

5) *Jnanayajna* : The pursuit of spiritual knowledge is a form of sacrifice.

Different types of persons, according to their *Samskaras*, follow different methods of sacrifice, and by performing them their mind reaches the final goal. All these are men of practical action in the field of spirituality. Those who work for Self-

purification and God-realisation are all men of rigid vows (*Samsitavratah*).

Hard discipline, Self-restraint, the parctice of vows, and such other *Sadhanas* are all necessary for Self-purification. The past *Samskaras*, the physical habits and mental tendencies have become a part and parcel of one's nature. To change them is indeed an uphill task. Perseverence will ultimately conquer. Nothing can be done in a day. All crookedness shall be made straight in course of time. The idle and weak cannot make any progress. Spiritupl realisation has its price and the price is self-control and renunciation. Renunciation of what ?- Of all the silly and worthless pleasures of the world. Indeed the price is very small compared to the fruit of attainment-the eternal bliss of *Brahmajnana*. It is like obtaining pure gold in exchage for worthless alloy. Who would not pay this price willingly and correctly ? The difficulty is not so great as it is thought of. The initial attempt disturbs the body and the mind as a result of the new discipline. But the discipline itself becomes natural by habit. The ascetic (*Yati*) mentioned here is not a *Sanyasi* but a worker on the spiritual path. A huge tree cannot be cut with a nail-chipper; the axe is needed. And the axe to cut the mighty tree of ignorance and delusion is persistent, hard, unremitting discipline, restraint and control.

29. अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ २९

Apane juhvati pranam prane 'panam tatha 'pare ।
pranapanagati ruddhva pranayamaparayanah । 29

Meaning : प्राणायामपरायणाः *pranayamaparayanah :* Those who are devoted to the practice of breath-control, अपरे *apare :* others, प्राणापानगती *pranapanagati :* the course of the in-coming and out-going breaths, रुद्ध्वा *ruddhva :* controlling, अपाने *apane :* in the out-going breath, प्राणम् *pranam :* the in-coming breath, तथा *tatha :* thus, प्राणे *prane :* in the in-coming breath, अपानम् *apanam :* the out-going breath, जुह्वति *juhvati :* sacrifice.

Substance : The technique of breath-control is described here as a form of sacrifice. In the science of *Ashtanga Yoga*, the fourth stage is *Pranayama*. This practice is helpful in removing the diseases of the body and keeping the mind still. *Pranayama* has three parts. Breathing in is called *Puraka*; expelling the breath is called *Rechaka*; and retention of breath is called *Kumbhaka*. *Pranayama* is often accompanied with some holy *mantra* like *OM*.

Breathing (*Prana*) is closely connected with the operations of the mind. It is everybody's experience. When a gust of passion disturbs the mind, the breath becomes atonce irregular, and as the passion cools down the breath also becomes normal. When the breath is irregular owing to some physical exertion, it is again impossible to concentrate the mind. So regularity of breathing always accompanies mental concentration. By controlling the breath, the mind is also controlled. For this reason, breath-control is prescribed as a healthy and helpful practice in spiritual life. The seeker has to learn the technique from a competent master. Here breath-control is mentioned as a form of sacrifice.

30. अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान्प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ ३०

Apare niyataharah pranan praneshu juhvati ।
sarve 'pyete yajnavido yajnakshapita kalmashah ॥ 30

Meaning : अपरे *apare* : others, नियताहाराः *niyataharah* : of regulated food, प्राणान् *pranam* : life-breaths, प्राणेषु *praneshu*: in life breaths, जुह्वति *juhvati* : sacrifice, एते सर्वेऽपि: *ete sarve api*: all these also, यज्ञविदः *yajnavidah* : knowers of sacrifice, यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः *yajnakshapitakalmashah* : whose sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

Substance : Others of regulated food, sacrifice the life-breaths in the life-breaths; all these also are knowers of sacrifice whose sins are destroyed by sacrifice.

Commentary : Thus far the Lord has explained twelve different types of *yajnas*. Of these the last two are the regulation and control of food-habits. No one should commit the mistake of doubting what connection there is between food and spiritual attainment. Without fear of any exaggeration, it can be asserted that food is the first thing about which the seeker should be extremely careful. Otherwise all his effort will come to naught. Over-eating or under-eating, eating at all odd times, in all places, all types of food from all kinds of persons, – all these should be carefully avoided. It is food that is turned into physical energy which in its turn is turned into mental energy that leads to spiritual illumination. Impure food not only unhinges the physical body but also irritates and provokes all kinds of undesirable humours which are detrimental to self-control. Some kinds of food like meat, garlic, and spices induce physical aberrations like indulgence in sex and irritability of temper, cruelty in word and deed, and other discardant impulses. They are all obstacles to spiritual progress.

Just as a loose nut in a complicated machine brings it to a standstill, just as a train meets with disaster if one of the sleepers is taken off, even so the whole system of spiritual life is disrupted if care is not taken about food. If the food is pure, the mind is pure; if the mind is pure, liberation is attained. The Lord here mentions that regulation of food is also a *yajna*. There are five conditions to determine the quality of food – (1) purity, (2) moderation, (3) righteous earning, (4) offering to the Lord, (5) timeliness.

The Lord has described various spiritual disciplines and each of them is given the sacred name of *yajna*. We understand that the old concept of *yajna* as a *Vedic* ritual accompanied with elaborate technique is given up, and a new significance is attached to other forms of discipline. Besides, it is here affirmed that all those who practise any of these disciplines are knowers of sacrifice (*yajnavidah*).

What then is the use of *yajnas* ? It is first and last a **method of purification.** All the sins of the past and all the evil

tendencies of the mind are destroyed by *yajna*. So it is imperative that the seeker should undertake some form of discipline and strive to attain purity which alone can lead him to Self-realisation.

Question: *What is the effect of performing yajna?*

Answer : All sins are destroyed by *yajna*.

The good resulting from the performance of yajna and the evil from its non-performance are explained.

31. यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१

Yajnasistamrita bhujo yanti brahma sanatanam ।
nayam loko'styayajnasya kuto'nyah kurusattama । 31

Meaning : कुरुसत्तम *kurusattama* : O Arjuna ! यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजः *yajnasishtamritabhujah* : those who eat the remnant of sacrifice which is nectar, सनातनम् *sanatanam* : eternal, ब्रह्म *brahma* : Brahman, यान्ति *yanti* : go, अयज्ञस्य *ayajnasya* : to the non-sacrificer, अयंलोकः *ayam lokah* : this world, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, अन्यः *anyah* : other, कुतः *kutah* : how.

Substance : Those who eat the remnants of sacriefie which is nectar go to eternal Brahman; to the non-sacrificer, even this world is not, how then can he get a higher world ?

Commentary : Thus far having explained various *yajnas*, the Lord now states their great merit. The remnants of food offered as sacrifice are equal to nectar, and by tasting it one reaches eternal Brahman. So the seeker should perform some form of *yajna*, some devotional act, some righteous deed, some oblation to the Divine, and then only should he take his food. Such food confers immortality. It has already been said that *yajna* destroys all sin and evil. Now the highest reward is offered to the sacrificer – the attainment of Brahman. The

purified mind merges in *Atma*, and *Atma* alone shines in its original untainted light. This is the Atmic state, the realisation of Brahman. How wondrful is the fruit of sacrifice !

The greatness of the result is proof of the excellence of the cause. *Yajna* is the cause and the result is direct realisation of Brahman. In this world, man endures all troubles for the purpose of acquiring a bit of wealth or pleasure or fame. After all, they are brief and short-lived. But the knowledge of Self is an enternal blessing for man. Should we not aspire for it ? If the same energy which one expends for possessing this or that worldly object, is directed towards the spiritual goal, man can achieve the highest even in this life. The Lord has offered ample choice in selecting the *yajna* most available to each individual. Various paths are open for this spiritual quest. Any one practice leads to the goal. Let people be alert and watchful, and they shall attain the goal.

The non-sacrificer loses both the worlds. What enjoyment or happiness or joy can he have even in this world ? Indisciplinary men who have neither will nor knowledge cannot hope to make anything even in this earthly life. It is all misery, doubt and despair for them, and such men proceed from sorrow to sorrow. It should be understood that success in attaining purity is also the fruit of sacrifice (i. e.) the result of self-discipline and proper action. If one cannot do this, how can he hope to enter a higher world ? The Lord calls on mankind – "O ye mortal beings ! Having attained this human birth, if you do nothing for your spiritual uplift, you cannot get anything even in this life, much less in the next world."

Those who eat the remnant of sacrifice : Food is not a necessary ingredient in such *yajnas* like sense-restraint, self-control, *pranayama* etc. So in these cases, the word food may be understood as the nectar of peace and joy arising from spiritual practices.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahman ?*

Answer : Eternal and imperishable.

Question : *Who attains Brahman?*

Answer : Those who take the remnant of sacrifice.

Question : *What is the fate of the non-sacrificer ?*

Answer : He loses both this world and the next.

The Lord concludes this part of the Discourse on various Yajnas.

32. एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान्विद्धि तान्सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ३२

Evam bahuvidha yajna vitata brahmano mukhe ।
karmajan viddhi tan sarvan evam jnatva vimokshyase । 32

Meaning : एवम् *evam :* thus, बहुविधाः *bahuvidhah :* of different forms, यज्ञाः *yajnah :* sacrifices, ब्रह्मणः मुखे *brahmanah mukhe :* in the vedas (in the face of Brahman), वितताः *vitatah :* are spread, तान् सर्वान् *tan sarvan :* all those, कर्मजान् *karmajan :* born of action, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, एवं *evam :* thus, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva:* having known, विमोक्ष्यसे *vimokshyase :* you shall be liberated.

Substance : Thus various forms of sacrifice are spread out in the *Vedas*; know them all to be born of action; thus knowing you shall be liberated.

Commentary : Not only those types of *yajna* mentioned before but many more are elaborately described in the *Vedas* which have originated from the supreme Brahman.

Born of action : These sacrifices are all different modes of action. Speech is action, thought is action, work done with the body is action, the operation of the senses is action. So, action well-planned and executed with resolution is the cause of *yajna*. Individual effort is essential for the performance of *Yajna*. Inaction leads to nothing. Spirituality is indeed a practical science, and not an empty talk. So the seekers should

use each one of their faculties, physical and mental, for the purpose of performing these sacrifices. Such determined action alone can yield the highest fruit of liberation. The Lord exhorts all mankind to take to a life of action, perform *yajna*, purify the mind, and attain Brahman. In fact the despondency of Arjuna was a cowardly renunciation of action which he thought was a state of *jnana*. The Lord explains that such spurious and sentimental inaction is a sign of ignorance, and on the other side, one should act fearlessly and selflessly, so that the path may be opened for spiritual knowledge in due course. When man comes to understand that all *yajnas* are modes of action, then he is liberated.

Question : *Where are the yajnas described.*

Answer : In the *Vedas* -

Question : *How are they performed ?*

Answer : By action -

Question : *When man knows this, what will he attain ?*

Answer : Liberation.

Question : *What are the various forms of Yajna mentioned so far ?*

Answer :

(1) Daiva Yajna (2) Brahma yajna	25 verses
(3) Sense-control (4) Rejection of sense objects	26 ,,
(5) Mind control	27 ,,
(6) Dravya yajna (7) Tapo yajna (8) Yoga yajna (9) Svadhyaya Yajna	28 ,,
(10) Jnana Yajna	28 ,,
(11) Pranayama Yajna	29 ,,
(12) Niyatahara Yajna	30 ,,

The Lord explains the excellence of Jnana Yajna.

33. श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परंतप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ ३३

Sreyan dravyamayad yajnat jnanayajnah parantapa ।
sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapyate ॥ 33

Meaning: परन्तप *parantapa :* O Arjuna! द्रव्यमयात् *dravyamayat:* of wealth (objects), यज्ञात् *yajnat :* than sacrifice, ज्ञानयज्ञः *jnanayajnah :* sacrifice of knowledge, श्रेयान् *sreyan:* more excellent, पार्थ *Pardha :* O Arjuna! सर्वम् कर्म *sarvam karma :* all actions, अखिलम् *akhilam :* in its entirety, ज्ञाने *jnane :* in knowledge, परिसमाप्यते *parisamapyate :* is culminated.

Substance: O scorcher of foes! Knowledge-sacrifice is superior to sacrifice performed with objects. All actions, O Arjuna, in their entirety, culminate in knowledge.

Commentary: *Jnana-yajna* implies enquiry into the Truth, the pursuit of reality. Discrimination between *Atma* and *Anatma*, the Seer and the Seen, hearing of Truth, thinking and meditating on Truth, restraining the senses, controlling the mind, the destruction of the latent tendencies,-all these are comprehended by the term *Jnana Yajna.*

Dravya yajna means sacrifice performed with the aid of material objects. It is here said that *Jnana Yajna* is superior to *Dravya Yajna.* The reason is that Self-realisation (*Atma Jnana*), is the ultimate goal of all embodied beings. Man has forgotten his real nature by ignorance, and to become aware of his real Self is the object of all religions and philosophy. All religious practices lead finally to this knowledge. The fruits of all sacrifices are comprehended in Self-Knowledge, the supreme bliss and blessedness of Brahman. So whatever fruits are obtainable by the performance of *Dravya Yajna* are fully and completely realised in *Brahma Jnana.* Therefore it is declared

that *Jnana Yajna* is superior to all others. It is the *yajna* par excellence.

The end of all forms of *Karma* is knowledge. The sacrifices purify the mind, remove all sins, and in that way renders Self-Knowledge possible. And, just as the rivers join the ocean, so also all the works with their fruits are merged in Brahman. The idea is that the fruits of *karma* are not destroyed but fully realised in the bliss of *Brahma Jnana.*

So every man should strive for wisdom, and towards that end, he should take the aid of *Yajna* in the form of some good works. Whatever may be the practice followed, its goal is wisdom. At some time or other, every one should acquire this knowledge by which he attains liberation.

Karma is '*sadhana*', knowledge is '*sadhya*'. *Karma* takes man to the threshold of *Jnana*, and *Jnana* lifts him up to the heights of the liberated state. From this we understand that liberation is not a sudden blast of knowledge, but the end of a long process of good and righteous action. By ceaseless devotion to God, man acqires His grace, and He by his infinite compassion opens the eye of wisdom in man and *Atma* is then perceived. Even after self-realisation, some wise men continue to work for the benefit of humanity. Thus in this verse the excellence of *Jnana* and the need for *Karma* are both emphasised.

Question : *What is the supreme yajna ?*

Answer : *Jnana Yajna* (Knowledge sacrifice).

Question : *Then, what is the use of other yajnas ?*

Answer : They are realised in their entirety and along with their fruits in the supreme bliss of *Brahma Jnana.*

The path to acquire wisdom is declared.

34. तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४

Tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya ।
upadekshyanti te jnanam jnaninastattvadarsinah ॥ 34

Meaning : तत् ज्ञानम् *tat jnanam :* that knowledge, प्रणिपातेन *pranipatena :* by long prostration, परिप्रश्नेन *pariprasnena:* by question, सेवया *sevaya :* by service, विद्धि *viddhi :* know, तत्त्वदर्शिनः *tattvadarsinah :* the seers of truth, ज्ञानिनः *jnaniah:* the sages of wisdom, ते *te :* to you, उपदेक्ष्यन्ति *upadekshyanti :* will instruct.

Substance : Know that (Knowledge) by long prostration, question and service (to the master). The sages who have realised the truth will instruct you in that Knowledge.

Commentary : In the previous verse, the excellence of *Jnana* is declared. The question how and from whom such knowledge could be obtained is answered here.

The seers of truth : *Brahma jnana* can be obtained only from the sages who have directly perceived the Truth. They are men who have realised the Self and transcended all the doubts and complications of earthly life. They have *seen* the Truth of the *Vedas* and *Sastras*. They have gone beyond them. Such men indeed are very rare. But they alone are qualified to instruct the aspirant in Self-Knowledge. The Lord uses the term '*tattva-darsinah*' (The seers of Truth) to distinguish these from others who have only read about Truth in books. Such book-learning is far different from actual Self-realisation. Truth is a direct experience. For such men, Truth is as clear as material objects are clear to us. When one speaks of sages who have seen the Truth, he should not imagine that Trurth is some thing external to them like a pole or wall or tree. Truth is not different from one's own Self which is also the Self in every being. Thus, sages who are directly experiencing the Self-state are world-teachers from whom the sincere aspirants obtain Knowledge of *Atma*.

What are the qualifications of the aspirant and under what conditions would they receive the blessing of the Master? Three conditions are prescribed. 1) The seeker should approach the Master in all humility and prostrate himself at the feet of the Master. (*Pranipatena*). Pride and egotism should be utterly crushed when

the seeker stands in the presence of the Master. The seeker may be a King ruling over millions of people, but the pride of position counts for nothing when he stands before the Knower of Brahman. The seeker may be an intellectual gaint, but supremacy of learning counts for nothing before the Knower of Brahman. The seeker may belong to a high caste, but superiority of caste counts for nothing before a Knower of Brahman. In short, all power and position, all wealth and treasure, are not in the least helpful to obtain that Knowledge which brings man face to face with Truth.

From the *Upanishads* and *Puranas* we get several illustrations of such humility on the part of learned Kings and Emperors who desired to know the Truth. They have walked bare-footed to some mountain-cave where the sage lived with only a loin cloth to cover his nakedness, with only roots and leaves to sustain his mortal body. Humility is the first condition imposed. Does the all-renouncing sage expect any honour from those who go to him ? Not at all. He is indifferent to honour and dishonour. It is for the benefit of the seeker that humility is prescribed as a condition, and not to confer honour on the sages. By such humility, the seeker overcomes the first and last obstacle on the path of Self-realisation, (i. e.) egotism, a clinging to the little self which produces a sense of false pride and greatness. So humility is the rule of conduct for all seekers in the presence of the Master.

Brahma Jnana is superior to every thing else in the world. Let us recall to mind the great combative encounter between Vasishta and Viswamitra. Viswamitra used all the weapons against Vasishta who defended himself with his lone *Brahmadanda*. All the weapons were swallowed up by the *Brahmadanda*, as the ocean swallows up all the floods in the world. Viswamitra then understood the superior power of Brahman.

The knower of Brahman has such power but he never uses it. Against whom and for what purpose should he use it ? The sage is embodied wisdom, is God Himself in the embodied state. So the seeker of knowledge should prostrate himself

before the Master with a deep feeling of humility and obedience. According to ordinary custom people remove the footwear and head-dress when they go to temple. Pride and egotism which cling to the body should be given up when one meets a great Master from whom he hopes to receive spiritual illumination.

(2) *By question*: Having prostrated himself before the Master, the seeker should then humbly ask the *Guru* to teach him, to clear his doubts, to lift him from the mine of delusion, to give him peace, and to help him to realise the Truth. The aim of the seeker should be to receive light and not to test the Master's capacity to argue with him, or examine the depth of his scholarship. Such an arrogant attitude is futile. The Master is not disturbed or perturbed by the puzzles and riddles of the questioner. But the seeker loses the very aim of his quest by foolish argumentation. The Master knows by a single glance at the seeker what type of man he is, what doubts he has, what obstacles there are for him to overcome, and gives him suitable instructions. But he does so only when he is convinced about the sincerity of the seeker. Otherwise the Master can do nothing to communicate his knowledge to the disciple. So it is prescribed as the second condition that the seeker should humbly place his doubts before the Master and accept his guidance.

(3) *By service*: Service to the Master is the third condition. Blessed are those who have opportunities of such divine service. To wash the Master's clothes, dry them and keep them ready for his use, to massage his feet, to prepare food for him, to bring fruits and flowers for his worship, – in these ways to serve the Master and win his grace is the duty of the aspirant. It should be remembered that the Master is not in need of somebody's service. It is meant only for the benefit of the disciple. It is an act of devotion. If the Master employs him in some work, it is a blessing that the Master confers on the aspirant. We come across intstances of utterly illiterate persons rising to the heights of spiritual glory by simple devoted service to the Master. Their love for the *Guru* is the open secret of Self-realisation, and service works the miracle.

When the seeker fulfills these conditions, the Master out of his mercy instructs him in *Brahmajnana*. The right approach of the seeker induces the right spirit of the Master. It is the duty of the Master to help the aspirant in his quest for Truth, and he does so out of compassion and not for any material reward. Those great Masters are naturally full of pity for suffering humanity, and when people come to them loaded with sorrow and crushed by suffering, they are moved by cosmic compassion and do every thing possible to save the striken souls from sorrow and delusion.

What is that the Master teaches ? Truth, which they have known and seen, in which they have their life and being.

This verse explains clearly the relationship between the Master and the disciple and the duties of each in relation to the other. We understand how the Masters and disciples lived in ancient hermitages. Even today there are Masters of this type if only the seeker is keen about his quest. The very power of the disciple's aspiration for knowledge will draw to him the right type of Master from the unknown regions of the earth. This is the simple law of magnetism and no real aspirant need be disheartened that he is not able to get the proper *Guru* (master). The *Guru* is always there if the seeker's aspiration is sufficiently intense to draw him into the orbit.

Here a doubt may be created why Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to seek out a Master and learn the Truth. (1) It may be that the Lord wants Arjuna to confirm his realisation by instructions from a *Guru*. (2) It may be that the Lord is just describing the normal mode of spiritual instruction in the world.

Question : *From whom is Knowledge obtained* ?

Answer : From the great Masters who have seen the Truth.

Question : *What is the code of conduct for the seeker* ?

Answer : He should prostrate himself at the feet of the Master, ask him for instruction in a humble manner, and serve him in all possible ways.

35. यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ ३५

Yajjnatva na punar mohamevam yasyasi pandava ।
yena bhutanyaseshena drakshyasyatmanyatho mayi । 35

Meaning : पाण्डव *Pandava :* O Arjuna ! यत् *yat :* which (Jnana), ज्ञात्वा *jnatva :* knowing, पुनः *punah :* again, एवम् *evam :* thus, मोहम् *moham :* delusion, न यास्यसि *na yasyasi :* (you) will not get, येन *yena :* by which knowledge, भूतानि अशेषेण *bhutani aseshena :* all beings, आत्मनि *atmani :* in (your) Self, अथो *atho :* also, मयि *mayi :* in me, द्रक्ष्यसि *drakshyasi :* (you) will see.

Substance : O Arjuna! Having obtained this Knowledge, you will not thus be deluded again and by this Knowledge you will see all beings in your Self and also in Me.

Commentary : The Knowledge received from the *Brahmanishta Guru* consists in (1) the removal of all former delusions for ever, and (2) the perception of all beings in one's own Self and also in God. Let us understand these two aspects in *Jnana.*

(1) The proof of having eyes is not to fall into the pit. If a person falls, it is clear that he cannot see. Thus the proof of *Brahmajnana* is the clearing away of all delusions which have been haunting man from time immemorial. *Atma*, the Self, is alone real and all else is an illusion. To know this from experience is *Jnana.* How can that wise man be deluded again? He sees every thing as his own Self and knows that there is nothing else but the Self. All this is one indivisible ocean of *Sachidananda.*

When the mango is raw it is sour and bitter. But when it becomes ripe, it is sweet all over. Thus in the deluded state when man sees the manifold world, there is fear and hatred, and sorrow and suffering. But when all is seen as *Atma*, as God Himself, there can be no delusion, and when there is no delusion,

there is no sorrow. Arjuna was deluded when he saw his relations and friends, and sorrow possessed him at the awful vision of their destruction on the battle-field. The Lord teaches him that he would never again be the victim of such delusion any time thereafter when he obtained *Brahmajnana* from the Master.

The sine qua non of wisdom is freedom from delusion and any kind of attatchment to sense-pleasures. The Lord emphasised the need for practice and realisation and exposes the pretensions of those for whom religion is mere talk and verbal jugglery. It is practice that counts. The seeker should constantly examine himself : 'Am I free from delusion ? Am I free from pride and arrogance? Am I free from envy towards other people's fame and prosperity ? Is there hatred and anger in me ? How far have I overcome my sensual nature ?' In this way every one should thoroughly cleanse his mind day after day and purify the senses and the mind. There is no other way. The aspiration for the higher Self should be strengthened in order to overcome the desires of one's lower nature. 'Aim at the highest, do the best, and success is assured in due course'. This is the Lord's exhortation to all mankind in the Gita.

(2) The second aspect of the *Jnana* is that the sage of steady wisdom is able to see the whole universe in his own Self and also in God. The whole universe with all its elements moving and unmoving is superimposed on *Atma* which is the basic Reality. When the rope is mistaken for a snake, what is the reality on which the delusion is based? The rope is the reality. So the snake which is super-imposed by one's delusion is not different from the rope. Even so the super-imposed universe is not really different from Brahman. This being so, the wise man sees the entire world in the Self, Brahman. The mind is the creator of the universe, and the mind itself is in *Atma*, the Self. Even so, the mind and all that it creates is in the Self. 'You are not in delusion. It is delusion that is in you; all the worlds are in you and you are not in any world; all time is in you and you are not in any time, past, present or furture'. The *Jnani* has understood the Truth.

Also in me: For the sage of steady wisdom, the Self, is the Lord Himself. And so what he sees in his Self, the same is seen in God also.

'The *Jnani* is Myself'–says the Lord. There is no difference. This is the *Advaitic* realisation of the supreme Brahman. In that state, the devotee and God are one, the disciple and the *Guru* are one. There is no second thing at all. It is all one indivisible absolute Reality.

By seeing all beings in Self and God the sage becomes one with God. It cannot happen that the whole universe can be seen in two separate things. Self and God are one and the same. The man of Self-realisation is God Himself.

Question : *What is the fruit of obtaining Jnana.*

Answer : Man is never deluded, thereafter; he sees the whole universe in his own Self, and also in God.

The excellence of Jnana is declared in various ways :

36. अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं संतरिष्यसि ॥ ३६

Api chedasi papebhyah sarvebhyah papakrittamah ।
sarvam jnana plavenai'va vrijinam samtarishyasi ॥ 36

Meaning : सर्वेभ्यः पापेभ्यः *sarvebhyah papebhyah :* than all sinners, पापकृत्तमः *papakrittamah :* most sinful, अपि चेत् असि *api chet asi :* even if, (you) are, सर्वम् *sarvam :* all, वृजिनम् *vriginam :* sin, ज्ञानप्लवेन एव *jnanaplavena eva :* by the raft of knowledge, alone, सन्तरिष्यसि *santarishyasi :* you shall cross.

Substance : Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you shall cross over all sin by the raft of Knowledge.

Commentary : The excellence of *Brahmagnana* is further declared here. Even the worst sinner can purify himself of all

sins by Knowledge. Mountains of sins are burnt into ashes in a trice by a spark of divine wisdom. That is why the Lord gives a highly superlative definition of the sinner. If even the most wicked is able to cross over all sin by the raft of Knowledge, others need not have any doubt about their salvation through knowledge. Enough it is if there is repentence and a determination to sin no more.

The verse does not mean that people should wilfully commit sins. That is not the import of the Lord's teaching. In former births, out of ignorance, man might have committed several kinds of sins, but all of them would be cleared when the light of knowledge dawns. Indeed man's sins are compared to an ocean and Knowledge is rightly spoken of as the launch to cross the ocean. We have such examples of sinners turned into saints. The life of Valmiki illustrates this point. He lived the life of a dacoit in the beginning, but when wisdom dawned on him the sinner was transformed into a saint.

Question · *What is the means to overcome sins ?*

Answer : Knowledge.

Question : *What is the excellence of Jnana ?*

Answer : *Jnana* purifies the worst sinner and leads him to liberation.

The excellence of Jnana is further stated by comparing it to fire.

37. यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात्कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते तथा ॥ ३७

Yathai'dhamsi samiddho'gnir bhasmasat kurute'rjuna ।
jnanagnih sarva karmani bhasmasat kurute tatha ॥ 37

Meaning : अर्जुन *Arjuna :* O Arjuna ! समिद्धः *samiddhah:* blazing, अग्निः *agnih :* fire, एधांसि *edhamsi :* fuel, यथा *yatha:* as, भस्मसात् *bhasmasat :* reduces to ashes, तथा *tatha :* so, ज्ञानाग्निः *jnanagnih :* the fire of Knowledge, सर्वकर्माणि *sarva-*

karmani : all actions, भस्मसात्कुरुते *bhasmasatkurute* : reduces to ashes, destroys.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Just as blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, even so the fire of Knowledge destroys all actions.

Commentary : There is no sorrow when there is no birth; there is no birth when there is no action; and there is no action when Knowledge is acquired. All actions done in the former state of ignorance are destroyed by the Knowledge now acquired. But this Knowledge should be perfect. Burning fire consumes all fuel thrown into it. Fire covered by ashes is simply extinguished if fuel is thrown over it. So the blazing fire of Knowledge destroys all actions.

For the man who possessed knowledge and perceived *Atma* all actions are destroyed. In the former verse it is said that the ocean of sin is crossed over by the raft of Knowledge. Here it is further stated that all actions are destroyed by the fire of Knowledge.

Question : *How can people get rid of Karma ?*

Answer : By Knowledge.

Question : *What is the excellence of Knowledge ?*

Answer : Knowledge destroys all actions, and thus man attains liberation.

38. न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ ३७

Na hi jnanena sadrisam pavitramiha vidyate ।
tat svayam yogasamsiddhah kalenatmani vindati । 38

Meaning : इह *iha* : in this world, ज्ञानेन सदृशम् *jnanena sadrisam* : like wisdom, पवित्रम् *pavitram* : pure, न विद्यते हि *na vidyate hi* : is not indeed, तत् *tat* : that (wisdom), योगसंसिद्धः *yogasamsiddhah* : perfected in yoga, कालेन *kalena* : in due season, आत्मनि *atmani* : in Self, स्वयम् *svayam* : oneself, विन्दति *vindati* : find.

Substance : Indeed there is nothing so pure as Knowledge in this world. He who is perfected in *Nishkama Karma* finds that wisdom by himself in *Atma* in due season.

Commentary : There are many things pure in this world. Of them all, knowledge is the purest and the most perfect. Nothing can purify man except Knowledge. The impurity caused by ignorance is only cleansed by Knowledge. The physical body needs cleansing with water and soap every day. The subtle body also needs purification. And the purifying agents are *Nishkama Karma*, meditation, worship of God and such other practices. Of them all, Knowledge is the best and greatest purifier.

By oneself : Each individual has to find that Knowledge by himself. One should eat by himself to satisfy his hunger. One should take medicine by himself to cure his own desease. The Master provides all the help needed for the spiritual quest, but finally each one should realise the Truth himself. There can be no proxy in *Jnana*. It is direct personal experience.

Perfected in Yoga : The man perfected in *yoga* obtains Knowledge. *Nishkama Karma Yoga* should become automatic, spontaneous and natural. Then *yoga* is said to be perfect. The mind is purified of the taint of Selfishness and attachment to the gross material world. Then man finds Knowledge.

In Self : Where is this Knowledge ? Is it in the sky or beyond the clouds? Is it in the other world? Or is it in the centre of the earth?–Where is this Knowledge ? It is in the Self. All the time it has been there. Not knowing it man has been seeking for it in the outside world, in temples, in rivers and mountains, and so on. After all this long search, man comes back to his own Self, and there he discovers that Knowledge which liberates him from sorrow and delusion. All knowledge, all perfection is already in the Self.

In due season : The Lord answers the question when this Knowledge becomes manifest. In due season, this Knowledge which is already in the Self reveals itself, and then the endless wanderings of the mind stop for ever. There is no time limit for this supreme revelation. When the mind becomes pure, Knowledge comes of its own accord. Sooner or later this Knowledge should manifest itself, the time taken depending on the ripeness of the individual. No one need be discouraged that he has not got it immediately. As he continues the spiritual *Sadhana*, the mind gradually drops off its taints and blemishes and Truth is seen and known. The plant of spirituality should be watered and taken care of in every way. Sincerety and earnestness are essential. By God's grace Knowledge is revealed to the aspirant.

Question : *What is the purest thing in the world ?*

Answer : Knowledge of *Atma*.

Question *How, when, and where is it found ?*

Answer : By the man perfected in *Karma Yoga*, the Knowledge is found in the Self in due time.

Who obtains this Knowledge, and what happens when it is obtained.

39. श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९

Sraddhavan labhate jnanam tatparah samyatendriyah ।
Jnanam labdhva param santim achirena'dhigacchati ॥ 39

Meaning : श्रद्धावान् *sraddhavan* : the man of faith, तत्परः *tatparah* : having that (Knowledge) as the supreme goal, संयतेन्द्रियः *samyatendriyah* : of controlled senses, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : Knowledge of Atma, लभते *labhate* : gains, ज्ञानम् *jnanam* : Knowledge, लब्ध्वा *labdhva* : having obtained, परां *param* : supreme, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, अचिरेण *Achirena* : soon, अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : The man of faith, having Knowledge as his supreme goal having controlled the senses, obtains Knowledge of *Atma*, and having obtained that enjoys peace ere long.

Commentary : Three qualities are mentioned here for gaining Knowledge.

(1) *The man of faith* : Faith is the seed of success even in worldly matters. The degree of faith in the *Sastras* and the teaching of the *Guru*, determine the degree of success. The greater the faith the sooner the success. The seeker should do the prescribed *Sadhana* with deep faith and it would surely lead him to spiritual illumination. Doubt will not bear any fruit what-so-ever. Doubt is the very negation of faith and want of faith results in utter failure. That is why the Lord insists on faith as an indispensable condition for the aspirant. The sick man should have faith in the physician and the medicine prescribed by him. Otherwise the efficacy of the medicine is neutralised by the negative attitude of the patient. As the *Sadhaka* practises the discipline sincerely at first, he would gain some simple spiritual experience, which would confirm his faith in the higher laws of spirituality. Faith, it should be understood is not a denial of one's reason and judgment. What is implied is that the seeker should carry out the instructions of the *Sastras* and the *Guru* in the full hope that they would yield the best results. And when he knows by experience the value of faith, his progress becomes quicker and smoother. So one should have faith in his spiritual destiny.

(2) *Having Knowledge as the supreme goal* : The aspirant should have single-minded devotion to the spiritual ideal. There should not be any discordant note in the general harmony of word, thought and deed. One may talk of spirituality and yet his thoughts may be plunged in gross worldliness, and his deeds may be utterly sensual. Such a split personality cannot make any progress in any direction. Divided aims and distracted minds achieve nothing. The personality of man, complete and entire, should be dedicated to

the spiritual aim. He should fully realise within himself that there is no other goal to strive for. Naturally, by discrimination, when it is known that all other things are painful perishable worthless stuff, the spiritual aim alone shines as a perfect star. Then Self-realisation becomes possible.

(3) *Of controlled senses* : Faith and single-minded devotion to the divine aim should be accompanied with systematic practice of sense-restraint. Faith and aspiration may do much, but for perfection in *Jnana* the senses should be brought under control. So long as the mind runs after material objects through the channels of the senses, wisdom cannot be found. The attempt is to turn the mind inwards. The sense-organs by their very nature function by attaching themselves to some physical object or other. The mind is linked to the senses, and so the mind runs out. This link should be cut, and the mind should be trained to look inward. Then the senses can do nothing. They remain powerless in their places. So sense-control is prescribed as the third characteristic of the man of Knowledge.

What is the fruit of this Knowledge? Peace, Supreme Peace (*Param santim adhigacchati*). Swiftly the wise man attains peace. Every one is seeking for peace and happiness. But it is eluding him. He seeks for it in worldly pleasures and possessions. But he does not find it in them. So the mind is restless and distracted. Where is that peace? The Lord answers the question. Peace is in the Knowledge of *Atma*, and nowhere else. Every little satisfaction which one desires from small pleasures and successes here and there in the world are only shadows of the real peace of the Self. So let all people go to the very source of Peace-*Atma*. Having thus described the excellence of *Jnana*, the Lord concludes that it leads to Supreme Peace.

Question : *Who can attain Jnana?*

Answere : The man of faith, devotion, and self-control attains Knowledge.

Question : *What is the fruit of Jnana?*

Answer : Peace –

Question : *What is the way to peace?*

Answer : Atma Jnana.

The Lord describes the fate of those who have no faith.

40. अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४०

Ajnascha sraddadhanascha samsayatma vinasyati ।
na'yam loko'sti na paro na sukham samsayatmanah ॥ 40

Meaning : अज्ञः च *ajnah cha* : the ignorant and. अश्रद्दधानः च *asradhadhanah cha* : the faiithless and, संशयात्मा *samsayatma* : the doubting person, विनश्यति *vinasyati* : perishes, goes to destruction, संशयात्मनः *samsayatmanah* : for the doubting self, अयम् *ayam* : this, लोकः *lokah* : world, न अस्ति *na asti* : is not, न परः *na parah* : no other world is not, न सुखम् *na sukham* : happiness, is not.

Substance : But the ignorant man, the faithless man, the doubting man goes to destruction. For the doubting self, this world is not, nor the next, nor happiness.

Commentary : While the positive declaration assures salvation to the man of faith, this nagative assertion condemns all those who have neither faith nor knowledge. It is necessary to describe the fate of the unbelievers to re-inforce the positive merits of the faithful.

(1) *The ignorant* : The ignorant man knows nothing of the Reality and so he believes that the objective world alone is real, and working for pleasure and fortune in it, he is cast into the ocean of *samsara*, the cycle of birth and death endlessly.

(2) *The faithless* : The faithless man also suffers destruction. The *Sastras* show the righteous path, the way of *Dharma*, and the *Guru* gives instructions about spiritual practices. The

seeker should have faith in both. Otherwise, he falls from the way of *Dharma*, and an unrighteous conduct of life leads to destruction.

(3) *The doubting person* : The doubting person knows not what his duty is. He doubts the veracity of the *Sastras*, the teachings of the *Guru*, and he has no goal to reach, no clear aim to achieve. Such a man is doomed to destruction. He is a failure in this world. He has no hope of a better world hereafter. He lives and dies unhappy and miserable.

So the Lord exhorts the seeker to work with faith, diligence, and determination. He should be filled with self-confidence and ferfect faith in the *Sastras* and the *Guru*. Such a man attains spiritual progress and realisation.

Question : *Who suffers destruction* ?

Answer : The ignorant man, the faithless man, the doubting man, suffers destruction.

Question: *What is the fate of the doubting person* ?

Answer : He has no happiness either in this world or in the next.

Question : *What is the duty of the aspirant* ?

Answer : (1) He should acquire Knowledge.

(2) He should have faith in the *Sastras* and the teaching of the *Guru*.

(3) He should not doubt the Reality of the Self.

The man of Knowledge is not bound by Karma.

41. योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१

Yogasannyastakarmanam jnanasamcchinnasamsayam
atmavantam na karmani nibadhnanti dhanamjaya ॥ 41

Meaning: धनञ्जय *dhanamjaya* : O Arjuna! योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणम् *yogasanyastakarmanam* : one who has given up the fruits of action by Nishkama karma yoga or who has surrendered the fruits of action to the Lord, ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् *jnanasamcchinnasamsayam* : one whose doubts are cleared by direct knowledge, आत्मवन्तम् *atmavantam* : one who is established in Atma, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, न निबध्नन्ति *na nibadhnanati* : do not bind.

Substance : O Arjuna ! Actions do not bind the man who has surrendered the fruits of *karma* by *yoga*, whose doubts are cleared by Knowledge, and who is firmly established in the Self.

Commentary : It is evident that the man who has no longing for the fruits of action, who has surrendered them to the Lord, is not bound by the wheel of *Karma*. He has no attachment to the body and so he has no sense of doership. He is established in *Atma*, and looks upon the world as an illusion and a dream. Hence actions do not bind him. He may be, continuously working, and yet he is not in action as he has no feeling of attachment and doership. The fire of Knowledge burns up all actions, as it has been already declared.

One whose doubts are cleared by practical Knowledge : Till the aspirant reaches the ultimate Truth doubts will crop up in some form or other. Only when Truth is seen, all doubts are cleared.

One who is established in Atma : It has already been declared that the seeker should be firmly established in the Self to attain complete freedom. He who has the Knowledge of the Self alone removes the last trace of the bondage of *Karma*. All others are bound to reap the fruits of their actions in an endless series of births.

Question : *Who is not bound by Karma* ?

Answer : The *Nishkama karma yogi*, the man whose doubts are cleared by knowledge, who is firmly established in the Self, is not bound by *Karma*.

Question : *So, what should man do to free himself from the bondage of Karma ?*

Answer : He should give up the fruits of work and surrender to the Lord. He should acquire Knowledge and clear all his doubts. He should get established in the Self, Then *Karma* cannot bind him.

The Lord exhorts Arjuna to act in the true spirit of Self-Knowledge.

42. तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ ४२

Tasmad ajnanasambhutam hritstham jnanasina'tmanah
cchittvai'nam samsayam yogam atistho'ttistha bharata. 42

Meaning : भारत *bharata :* O Arjuna ! तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, आत्मनः *atmanah :* your, हृत्स्थम् *hritstham :* residing in the heart, अज्ञानसम्भूतं *ajnanasambhutam :* born of ignorance, एनं संशयम् *evam samsayam :* this doubt, ज्ञानासिना *jnanasina :* with the sword of knowledge, छित्वा *cchitva :* having cut, योगम् *yogam :* Nishkama Karma yoga, आतिष्ठ *atishtha :* perform, उत्तिष्ठ *uttishtha :* arise.

Substance : Therefore, with the sword of Knowledge cleave asunder the doubt born of ignorance about the Self, dwelling in theheart and take refuge in *Yoga*. Arise, O Arjuna !

Commentary : Thus the Lord, having taught the secret of the Supreme Self, and by that Knowledge, the ability to perform *Nishkama Karma*, finally exhorts Arjuna to stand up and fight the battle. It should be noted that *Jnana* enables man to discharge his duties under all circumstances with a clear vision of the true nature of action, and his own immovable station is the Self. This Discourse is entitled *Jnana Yoga* and the last words of the Lord are "Stand up, O Arjuna!". Arjuna was sunk in despair and doubt, and now knowing the Truth about the real Self, he should stand up and fight the battle as it is the duty prescribed for him in the present situation.

Born of ignorance : All doubts and delusions have their origin in ignorance. The moment Knowledge dawns, they are all cleared as the mist is cleared by the sun.

In the heart : Ignorance is lodged in the heart from the beginning of time. But all that darkness is cleared when the lamp of Knowledge is lit (i. e.) when the real Self is perceived.

With the sword of knowledge: Ignorance cannot be destroyed by anything except *Jnana*. So *Jnana* is compared to a sword that cuts the knot of ignorance and releases man from the bondage of *Karma* forever.

Perform Nishkama Karma : Having attained Knowledge, what should man do ? This question is answered here. Does the *Jnani* sit in a corner and idle away the time ? No. He works, works for the good of humanity. He has nothing to gain by such work. It is all done to lift mankind from the mire of delusion, to spread the glorious message of spirituality, to kindle the fire of *Atmajnana* in others, to purify and ennoble man, to enable him to see the glory of his real Self. *Sankara*, *Buddha*, *Jesus* and other sages have done tremendous work for the good of mankind. Many wise men even today are performing such selfless work.

Arise : Stand up, O Arjuna ! How inspiring these words are for all people ! Are not millions of people, perplexed with doubt, and clouded by delusion, weeping and wailing helplessly on account of their weakness to meet the challange of life ? To rouse such men from their ignorance, and inspire them with courage to fight the battle of life is the greatest service that could be done to humanity. Lord Krishna, through the medium of Arjuna, delivers this message to mankind. Ignorance is the root cause of all the evils of life. It should be shattered by the sword of Knowledge, and then man becomes fit to fight the battle of life under all circumstances.

Question : *Where are doubt and delusion ?*

Answer : In the human heart.

Question : *Whence do they arise ?*

Answer : From ignorance.

Question : *How can ignorance be conquered ?*

Answer : By the sword of Knowledge.

Question : Having obtained the highest Knowledge what is man's duty ?

Answer : He works for the good of all beings.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे ज्ञानयोगो नाम
चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Jnana Yogo nama chaturtho 'dhyayah.

Thus in the Upanishads of the Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga* the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Fourth Discourse entitled *Jnana Yoga*
(The *Yoga* of Knowledge)

ॐ

श्री भगवद्गीता

SRI BHAGAVAD GITA

अथ पञ्चमोऽध्यायः

Atha Panchamodhyayah

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE

कर्मसंन्यास योगः

KARMASANNYASA YOGA

THE YOGA OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

The title of the Discourse :

Sannyasa means renunciation. In the beginning renunciation of *Karma* is not desirable. Action without desire and attachment should be practised, and when the mind is thus purified, it becomes possible for man to remain fixed in the Atmic state when there is no taint of the external world. So it is declared in this Discourse that *Karma Yoga* is superior to *Karmasannyasa*. When Self-realisation takes place, all actions drop away of their own accord. *Sannyasa* may also be taken to mean *Sankhya* or *Jnana*. Both *Karma Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* are discussed in this Discourse. Hence this Discourse is entitled *Karmasannyasa Yoga*.

Important Points of the Discourse :

(1) Declaration about *Sankhya yoga* and *Karma yoga*. (1–6 verses)

(2) The characteristics of the *Sankhyayogi* and *Karmayogi*, and their respective merit. (7–12 verses)

(3) Explanation of *Jnanayoga.* (13–26 verses)

(4) The *Yoga* of Meditation (*Dhyanayoga*) accompanied with devotion (*Bhaktiyoga*)) (27–29 verses)

How this Discourse is connected with the previous one :

In the Third and Fourth Discourses, both *Nishkama Karma* and *Jnana* are alternately emphasised, and it was stated that through *Nishkamakarma* Knowledge is obtained and when Knowledge is obtained *Nishkamakarma* becomes possible. Arjuna feels confused and doubtful about the right course of conduct for him. So he asks the Lord to tell him decisively which is superior–*Sankya* or *Karma.* The Discourse begins with Arjuna's question.

अर्जुन उवाच

1. संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १

Arjuna uvacha

Sannyasam karmanam krishna punaryogam cha samsasi ।
yacchreya etayorekam tanme bruhi sunischitam ॥ 1

अर्जुन उवाच–*Arjuna uvacha* : Arjuna said :

Meaning : कृष्ण *Krishna* : O Krishna ! कर्मणाम् *karmanam*: of actions, संन्यासं *Sanyasam* : renunciation, पुनः *punah* : again, योगम् च *yogam cha* : and Karmayoga, शंससि *samsasi* : you praise, एतयोः *etayoh* : of these two, यत् *yat* : which, श्रेयः *sreyah* : better, सुनिश्चितम् *sunischitam*, conclusively, तत् एकम् : *tat ekam* : that one, मे *me* : to me, ब्रूहि *bruhi* : tell.

Substance : O Krishna! You praise renunciation of actions and again the *yoga* of action. Of these two which is better ? That one tell me conclusively.

Commentary : The Lord has taught two main doctrines, one of *Karma* and the other of *Jnana* through renunciation of actions.

These two paths are equally emphasised. Arjuna listened attentively to the teaching on both sides and felt a natural doubt about the superiority of either of the two. The Lord clears the doubt.

The Lord's reply :

श्री भगवानुवाच

2. संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २

Sri Bhagavan uvacha

Sannyasah karmayogascha nihsreyasakarav ubhau ।
tayostu karmasannyasat karmayogo visishyate ॥ 2

श्री भगवानुवाच–*Sri Bhagavan uvacha* : The Blessed Lord said :

Meaning : संन्यासः *sanyasah* : renunciation, कर्मयोगश्च *karmayogah cha* : and yoga of action, उभौ *ubhau* : both, निःश्रेयसकरौ *nishreyasakarav* : lead the highest bliss, तयोः तु *tayoh tu* : but of these two, कर्मसंन्यासात् *karmasannyasat* : than renunciation of action, कर्मयोगः *Karmayogah* : Yoga of action, विशिष्यते *visishyate* : is superior.

Substance : Renunciation and *Yoga* of Action, both lead to the highest bliss. But of these two, *Yoga* of Action is superior to the renunciation of action.

Commentary : *Jnana* resulting in the renunciation of all actions, and *Karmayoga* consisting in action without desire and attachment, both lead to the highest good. Both yield the fruit of liberation. But in the process of development, the *Yoga* of desireless action is superior to the renunciation of action. *Karmayoga* is better than *Karmasannyasayoga.* Arjuna has not yet attained the Self-state, devoid of the phenominal universe. Millions of people live, move, and have their being in the objective world. It is not proper to teach them renunciation of action in the very beginning because they would not understand

the true meaning of that doctrine. And, if a man without ripeness of Knowledge renounces action, he becomes a lost soul here and hereafter. The common man should act, work, carry out the injunctions of the *Sastras*, and do every thing demanded of him as a duty in the course of his daily life. Such selfless devotion to duty will gradually purify the mind of all its latent tendencies, and then man becomes fit to enter the Self-state, where there is no actor, no action and nothing to act.

Question: *Which is better, Karma or Karmasannyasa?*

Answer : Both lead to the highest good. But of the two, action is better than renunciation of action.

The Karma Yogi who is free from the pairs of opposites (raga and dvesha) is praised.

3. ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३

Jneyah sa nityasannyasi yo na dvesti na kankshati ।
nirdvandvo hi mahabaho sukham bandhat pramuchyate ॥ 3

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho* : O mighty-armed Arjuna! यः *yah* : who, न द्वेष्टि *na dveshti* : hates not, न काङ्क्षति *na kankshati* : desires not, सः *sah* : he, नित्यसंन्यासी *nityasannyasi* : (as) perpetual ascetic, ज्ञेयः *jneyah* : should be known, हि *hi* : because, निर्द्वन्द्वः *nirdvandah* : he who is free from the pairs of opposites, like heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc., सुखम् *sukham* : easily, बन्धात् *bandhat* : from bondage, प्रमुच्यते *pramuchyate* : is set free.

Substance : O Arjuna! He who neither hates nor desires should be known as a man of eternal renunciation; He who is not subject to the pairs of opposites is easily set free from bondage.

Commentary : The meaning of *Sannyasa* is determined here. It signifies the abandoning of likes and dislikes and all

the host of the pairs of opposites to which man is subject every moment of his life. *Sannyasa* does not mean the abandoning of action.

Thus he who has freed himself from *Raga* and *Dvesha* is to be known as *Nityasannyasi* – the sage of enternal renunciation. The renunciation of others is only of a temporary and accidental character. They may wear the ochre robes and appear outwardly to belong to the class of *Sannyasins*, but so long as their hearts are tainted with desire and aversion, they are not *sannyasis* in the real sense of the term. So, renunciation of the hindering influence of *Raga* and *Dvesha* is *Sannyasa*. Abandoning the pairs of opposites is *Sannyasa*. Elimination of the internal tendencies is *Sannyasa*. He who has not these qualities, though he adopts the external form is not really a *Sannyasi*. He who has these qualities, though he is a householder engaged in a hundred tasks is a real *Sannyasi*.

Easily set free from bondage : Many people want to know if there is an easy path to salvation. Yes. There is. It is just giving up the selfishness which binds a man to the world by attachment and aversion. Such a man is '*nirdvandva*'. He cuts the knots of *Karma* easily, though he may be a house-holder performing all the duties of his station in life.

Question : *Who is a Nityasannyasi?*

Answer : He who has given up attachment and aversion, who has gone beyond the pairs of opposites, is a *Nityasannyasi*.

Question: *What is the result of transcending the pairs of opposites?*

Answer : He is easily freed from the bondage of *samsara*.

Question : *What is the easy path to freedom?*

Answer : Giving up all the pairs of opposites is the easiest path to freedom.

The fruit of Karmayoga and Jnanayoga is the same.

4. साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४

Samkhyayogau prithagbalah priavadanti na panditah ।
ekamapyasthitah samyag ubhayor vindate phalam ॥ 4

Meaning : सांख्ययोगौ *samkhyayogau:* Knowledge and per-formance of action, पृथक् *pridhak :* separate, distinct, बालाः *balah :* children, the ignorant, प्रवदन्ति *pravadanti :* speak, पण्डिताः *panditah :* the wise, न *na :* not, उभयोः *ubhayoh :* of both, एकमपि *ekam api :* even one of them, सम्यक् *samyak :* truly, आस्थितः *asthitah :* established in, फलम् *phalam :* fruit, विन्दते *vindate :* (he) obtains.

Substance : Children, not the wise, say that *Jnanayoga* and *karmayoga* are distinct: He who is truly established in either of them obtains the furit of both.

Commentary : The Pandit mentioned here is the sage who knows the Truth and lives in it, and not a man of mere theoritical Knowledge of the *Sastras* and the scriptures. Only the ignorant say that *karmayoga* and *jnanayoga* are distinct and separate. The Lord makes the categorical declaration that the fruit of both the *yogas* is the same, and that the *Sadhaka* who takes to one of them and is well established in it, will attain the highest fruit of both. Direct perception of *Atma* is the aim of all *yogas*. Some highly evolved men follow *Jnana marga*. They carry on the inquiry into the real nature of things, separate the Drik (the Seer) from the *Drisya* (the phenominal world) as the mythical swan is able to separate milk and water. Thus they realise *Atma* through *Jnana marga*. Others, according to their natural tendencies, take to *Karma marga*, and through desireless action and surrender of the fruits to the Lord, reach the same goal of *Atma-sakshatkara* by their purified minds. The reward of freedom, liberation, is the same for both, only the paths differ. So, in both, the seeker aims at the absorption of the ego

into the Self, and thereby transcend the feeling of personal doership. When the Jiva-idea is given up, what remains is only *Sivatvam* and nothing else. So the Lord exhorts the aspirant to take up either of the two *yogas*, and practice it well.

Truly established in : The condition is that the practice of any *yoga* should be perfect and the *sadhaka* should be firmly established in it. He should become an expert in the technique of the *yoga* which he follows. Then alone the desired result follows.

The history of the world provides many examples of great men who followed different paths and achieved the highest aim of life. The wisest of men in the *Jnana marga* have done the greatest service to humanity by their work. The greatest *Karma yogis* have always experienced *Atma Jnana* through a realisation of the universality of the Self in all their acts and achievements. Of coures, it is quite clear that what man is aiming at is the destruction of his personal separateness from the universal, the merging of the Self in the universal Self and the realisation of the universe in his own Self.

No wise man has ever disputed the truth of the different religions and creeds of the world. They practice not only tolerance but universal acceptance of all doctrines as paths to the one goal. The radio of a circle reach the centre from different positions and paths. The rivers reach the ocean through different ways. So one should give up narrowness and do not corp and cavil at those who do not follow the same path as his. Let there be greater understanding and larger outlook in these matters which concern the people most. This is the message of the Lord.

Question : *Are Sankhya and Karma yogas separate ?*

Answer : No. They appear different but produce the same fruit.

Question: *What then should be the objective of the seeker ?*

Answer : He should sincerely practice his chosen system and get firmly established in it. He will then attain the fruits of both the *yogas*.

5. यत्साङ्ख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं साङ्ख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५

Yat sankhyaih prapyate sthanam
tad yogairapigamyate ।
ekam samkhyam cha yogam cha
yah pasyati sa pasyati ॥ 5

Meaning : सांख्यैः *sankhyaih :* by the Jnanis, यत् स्थानम् *yat sthanam :* which position, state (Moksha), प्राप्यते *prapyate :* is reached, तत् *tat :* that (state), योगैः अपि *yogaih api :* by the yogis (Karma yogis) also, गम्यते *gamyate :* is reached, सांख्यं च *sankhyam cha :* and Sankhya, योगं च *yogam cha :* and yoga (Karma), एकम् *ekam :* one, यः *yah :* who, पश्यति *pasyati :* sees (knows), सः *sah :* he, पश्यति *pasyati :* sees (knows).

Substance : That state (*Moksha*) reached by men of Knowledge is also reached by men of Action (*Karma yogis*). He who sees the oneness of *Jnana* and *Karma*, really sees.

Commentary : The Lord reiterates the unity of *Jnanayoga* and *Karmayoga* in regard to the ultimate goal. The wise man sees the truth behind each *sadhana* and knows that though they are outwardly different, they are leading to the same consummation. It is only the ignorant who imagine that one path is superior to the other. These paths are intended to serve the needs of different aspirants born with different tendencies, and previous *samskaras*. One can reach any part of the globe by going east are west. Similarly one can reach the spiritual goal by any way. The harmonisation of different systems and creeds is the purpose of the Gita. At every step, the teacher of the Gita insists on the fact that the goal is the same, and explains the different paths from that stand-point. Hence the Gita is universal in its appeal to all mankind.

Question : *Who is the wise man ?*

Answer : The sage who knows that *Jnanayoga* and *Karmayoga* lead to the same state (*Moksha*) is the wise man.

Unless the mind is purified by Karmayoga firmness in Jnana is not possible.

6. संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म नचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ६

Sannyasastu mahabaho duhkhamaptum ayogatah ।
yogayukto munirbrahma nachirena'dhigacchati ॥ 6

Meaning : महाबाहो *mahabaho :* O mighty–armed Arjuna ! संन्यासस्तु *sanyasastu :* but renunciation, अयोगतः *ayogatah :* without Karma yoga, आप्तुम् *aptum :* to attain, दुःखम् *dukkham:* difficult, योगयुक्तः *yogayuktah :* harmonised in Karma yoga, मुनिः *munih :* sage (meditating on the Divine), न चिरेण *na chirena :* quickly, ब्रह्म *brahman :* to Brahman (the Supreme Reality), अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati :* goes.

Substance : O Arjuna ! But renunciation is difficult to attain without the *yoga* of action. The sage who is harmonised in *Yoga* quickly goes to *Brahman*.

Commentary : It is stated here that without the aid of *Karma Yoga* final renunciation and the realisation of Self is not possible. That is, perfection in *Karma Yoga*- doing work without desire and attachment, surrendering the fruits to the Lord – is absolutely necessary to rise to the plane of pure Knowledge. Certainly it is not an easy task to remain established in *Brahman*, without outward pulls and pressures of the objective world. All the bad *samskaras* have to be overcome, and they cannot be overcome except by righteous action and desireless performance of good work. *karmayoga* is therefore the elementary course, and *jnanayoga* is the higher course. Unless the foundation of *karmayoga* is strongly laid, the superstructure of *jnana* cannot stand for a minute. How can any one hope to remain fixed in the Atmic state when the mind is impure and drawn to the objective world in a hundred ways ? Let the mind be purified first. Hence the Lord insists on *karmayoga* for all seekers. Out of compassion, the Lord explains the natural sequence and graded progress of spiritual laws.

Sage : From the word *Muni* (Contemplator) we understand that the seeker should also contemplate on the Supreme, besides the practice of *Karmayoga*.

In this manner, the Lord prescribes *Karma marga* and self-surrender to the Divine as the natural evolution of spiritual life. It is of no use to take to *sannyasa* by a formal renunciation of action. Purity and sinlessness are the characteristic features of *sannyasa*. Without acquiring them, if a man adopts *sannyasa* by some accidental calamity or suffering, he would suffer ignominious failure in the attempt. Such men are deprived of the benefits of *Karma* and *Jnana*. "Acquire purity through *Nishkama Karma*, surrender to God, learn the secret of action; and you can quickly reach *Brahman*." This is the Lord's message.

Question : *When can Jnanayoga be realised ?*

Answer : After perfection is attained in *Karmayoga*.

Question : *How can one reach Brahman quickly ?*

Answer : The *Karmayogi* who has purified his mind reaches *Brahman* quickly.

The Karmayogi of self-control is not tainted by action.

7. योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७

Yogayukto visuddhatma vijitatma jitendriyah ।
sarvabhutatma bhutatma kurvannapi na lipyate ॥ 7

Meaning : योगयुक्तः *yogayuktah :* one performing Nishkama Karma, विशुद्धात्मा *visuddhatma :* heart purified, विजितात्मा *vijitatma :* controlled in mind, जितेन्द्रियः *jitendriyah :* senses subdued, सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा *sarvabhutatmabhutatma :* knowing the Self in him and in all to be one, कुर्वन्नपि *kurvan api :* though acting, न लिप्यते *na lipyate :* is not tainted.

Substance : He who is devoted to the *yoga* of action, with heart purified, with mind controlled and senses subdued, though acting, is not tainted.

Commentary : The Lord describes the qualities of the man who is continuously acting, but who is not tainted by sin in any way. Performance of *Nishkama karma*, purity of heart, conquest of mind, surrendering the senses, perception of the one Self in all beings–these are the characteristics of the man of perfect-wisdom.

From this we understand that the *Karmayogi* and *Jnanayogi* look alike in the final stages of spiritual life. If one possess these five qualities, he is not tainted by his work in any way. If action is done for selfish purposes, with an impure mind and heart and slavery to the senses then such action binds man to the wheel of *samsara*.

The perception of the one Supreme Self in himself and in all beings leads the aspirant to the realisation of the unity of all things. For such a man there cannot be any hatred of others, no desire to injure others for his own profit, no envy and jealousy, no competitive spirit, no mental hurry to go ahead of every other man, as we find in the practical world.

The seeker should cultivate these qualities with all sincerity and devotion. Nothing can then bind him.

Question : *Who is the man not tainted by action ?*

Answer : The *yogi* who performs *Nishkarma Karma*, who has purified his heart, who has controlled his mind, who has subdued the senses, who sees the one Self in himself and in all beings, is not tainted by action.

How the wise man looks upon all his actions is described in two verses.

8. नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ॥ ८

9. प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९

Nai'va kimchit karomi'ti yukto manyeta tattvavit ।
pasyan srinvan sprisan jighrann asnan gachhan svapan svasan ॥

Pralapan visrijan grihnannunmishan nimishannapi ।
indriyani'ndriyartheshu vartanta iti dharayan ॥ 9

Meaning : तत्त्ववित् *tattvavit :* one who knows the essence of things, युक्तः *yuktah :* harmonised with Self, पश्यन् *pasyan :* seeing, शृण्वन् *srinvan :* hearing, स्पृशन् *sprisan :* touching, जिघ्रन् *jighran :* smelling, अश्नन् *asnan :* eating, गच्छन् *gacchan:* going, स्वपन् *svapan:* sleeping, श्वसन् *svasan:* breathing, प्रलपन् *pralapan :* talking, विसृजन् *visrijan :* giving, गृह्णन् *grihnan :* grasping, उन्मिषन् निमिषन् अपि *unmishan nimishan api:* opening the eyelids and closing the eyelids even, इन्द्रियाणि *indriyani :* senses, इन्द्रियार्थेषु *indriyartheshu :* in the objects of senses, वर्तन्ते इति *vartante iti :* move thus, धारयन् *dharayan :* being convinced, किंचित् *kimchit :* anything, नैव करोमि इति *naiva karomi iti :* I do not even do thus, मन्येत *manyeta :* should think.

Substance : The harmonised *yogi* who knows the essence of things, thinks "I do nothing", seeing, hearing, touching, smelling eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, giving, grasping, opening and closing the eyelids even. He is convinced that the senses move among the objects of the senses.

Commentary : The attitude of the man of perfect Knowledge is explained here. *Atma* is the witness of all phenomena. Just as the sun is only a witness of the various human actions that take place in the light that he sheds, just as the lamp is only a witness of the actions taking place in its light, *Atma* is just a witness of the activities of the body, the senses, and the mind, which take place by His all-pervading life-force. It remains untainted by them, ever pure and ever perfect.

To realise one's own identity with *Atma* is perfection of Knowledge.

In fact, there is only *Atma*, and the apparent existence of the individual-self is fiction. It is non- existent, and yet appears

to exist. Ignorance *(avidya)* covers up the reality, and has imposed a fictitious sense of separateness on man, and so he thinks of himself as *Jiva*, separate from *Paramatma*. It is like the wave imagining itself to be separate from the ocean.

The *Jiva*, having imagined that he is a separate entity, identifies himself with the body, senses and mind. When the bodily organs are moving and acting, when the mind thinks and feels, he thinks that he is thinking and feeling. When the senses function in their own respective sense-objects, he thinks that he is functioning. This body-identification is caused by ignorance. By spiritual *sadhana* and knowledge the wise man discovers the tremendous error of body-identification (***dehatmabuddhi***) and regains his original state of *Atma*. When ***dehatmabuddhi*** is removed, *Atmabuddhi* is achieved. In that state, the body, senses, and mind, and all their functions and actions, are perceived as distinctly separate from the Self.

Pretensions to *Jnana* is a dangerous tendency. Since ***Atma*** is beyond all laws and since the *Jiva* is no other than *Atma*, it is quite possible for pretenders to be plunged in the mire of sense-pleasures, and yet claim immunity from them by simply repeating the slogan 'I do not anything'. The Lord has declared the conditions of *Jnana* with perfect clarity. The *Jnani* who could say 'I do not anything' should be one whose heart is purified (*visuddhatma*) and whose senses are subdued (*Jitendriyah*). Of what avail is it to say 'I do not anything', when at every step one is identifying himself with all the pleasures of the body and the senses ? Let the seeker carry out a thorough search into their own hearts and find out taints and blemishes of lust, greed and hatred. Let these sins be purified first through *Nishkamakarma*, and then only the seekers would be fit to enter the plane of the pure Knowledge of the Self.

From *Tamas* to *Rajas*, from *Rajas* to *Sattva*, and from *Sattva* to pure *Sattva*, from the lower to the higher the seeker has to rise gradually. One who has reached the state of pure *Sattva* cannot be drawn by the senses to indulge in the common pleasures of the body. His mind cannot dwell on worldly matters.

His words do not smack of worldliness in any manner. In word, thought and deed, he is pure, nay purity is his nature. He lives constantly in the light and bliss of *Brahman*, and never more shall he be diverted by the illusion of worldly enjoyment. Would a man who has awakened from his sleep think of and run after the pleasures of the dream ? He knows that they are false and delusive. So would the *Jnani* understand that all the pleasures which he had in the past were only the reflections of a mirage, and he has been fooled too frequently by mistaking the apparent to be the Real. So he is careful to remain steadfast in the Self. It is only such a man of Self-Knowledge who can say – 'I do not any thing.' Such men have done great work for the good of humanity, without the least trace of personal doership.

So, first of all, by the practice of *Nishkama Karma*, devotion to God, *Dhyana*, the heart should be purified and the Self should be realised through direct experience. Then, whether he works or not, he is not bound in any way. The mind, like a burnt seed is void of producing any reactions. He sees and knows that the whole of the phenominal world and all his actions in it are only dramatic performance taking place in His presence, while he remains only a spectator.

Question : *What is the attitude of the sage of wisdom towards the bodily and mental activities ?*

Answer : He knows that the senses move in the sense-world, and he has the clear idea 'I do not anything.'

The Lard explains how to act without being bound by Karma.

10. ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १०

Brahmanyadhaya karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah ।
lipyate na sapapena padma patram iva'mbhasa ॥ 10

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, कर्माणि *karmani* : actions, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani*: in the eternal Brahman, आधाय *adhaya*: having placed,

सङ्गम् *sangam* : attachment, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva* : having given up, करोति *karoti* : does, सः *sah* : he, अम्भसा *ambhasa* : by water, पद्मपत्रम् इव *padmapatram iva* : like the lotus-leaf, पापेन *papena*: by sin, न लिप्यते *na lipyate* : is not tainted.

Substance : He who acts placing all actions in the enternal *Brahman*, giving up attachment, is unaffected by sin like the lotus leaf by water.

Commentary : The doctrine of *Karmayoga* is restated here. All actions should be surrendered in the Eternal, and all personal attachments to the fruits thereof should be given up. There should be no feeling of personal doership. Such a worker is not affected by sin. The idea is illustrated by means of a simile. The lotus leaf is in water, and yet it is not tainted by the water rolling over and around it. Similarly the expert in *Karmayoga* is engaged in a thousand activities, but he is not touched or tainted by sin in any way.

By the Knowledge he has acqired, he knows that all objects and actions are only reflected images in the Supreme *Brahman*. He is himself That. So there are no desires or attachments for him. Having themselves escaped from the tarments of *karma*, they work for the spiritual uplift of humanity. They are free because they know the Truth, and they have surrendered every thing to the Lord or the eternal *Brahman*.

Question : *Who is not bound by karma ?*

Answer : He who has surrendered all actions to the eternal *Brahman*, who has given up all attachments, is not bound by *karma*.

Question : *How ?*

Answer : Like the lotus-leaf in the water.

The Yogi acts without attachment.

11. कायेन मनसा बुद्ध्या केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ११

Kayena manasa buddhya
kevalairindriyairapi ।
yoginah karma kurvanti
sangam tyaktva'tmasuddhaye ॥ 11

Meaning : योगिनः *yoginah :* the Karmayogis, आत्मशुद्धये *atmasuddhaye :* for self-purification, सङ्गम् *sangam :* attachment, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* abandoning, कायेन *kayena :* with body, मनसा *manasa :* with mind, बुद्ध्या *buddhya :* with intellect, केवलैः *kevalaih :* only (without attachement), इन्द्रियैरपि *indriyanih api :* with senses also, कर्म *karma :* action, कुर्वन्ति *kurvanti :* do.

Substance : The devotees of *karmayoga* act for self-purification with body, mind, intellect, and also senses, abandoning all attachment.

Commentary : *For self-purification - Nishkama Karma* is done for self-purification. The *yogi* works with his body, mind and intellect, without egoism or attachment. He has acquired such control over the senses that they are free from attachment and aversion (*raga* and *dvesha*) and so they are described here as '*Kevalah*'. It seems that the perfect *yogi* makes the instruments of action work in their proper fields, even as a mechanic makes the machine work. By such work the mind becomes absolutely pure and liberation is thereby attained. The liberated *yogi* continues work so long as the vehicle of the body (*upadhi*) remains, but all that he does is only for the sake of others, for the benefit of mankind. The seekers should work in that spirit and attain Self-realisation.

Question : *How can the mind be purified ?*

Answer : Work without egoism or attachment purifies the mind.

Question : *How does the Nishkama karma Yogi act ?*

Answer : Abandoning all attachment, he works with the body, mind, intellect and senses.

Question : *What is the result of such work ?*

Answer : Purity of mind.

The different results of Nishkama karma and Sakama karma are stated :

12. युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ १२

Yuktah karmaphalam tyaktva santimapnoti naisthikim ।
ayuktah kamakarena phale sakto nibadhyate ॥ 12

Meaning : युक्तः *yuktah :* harmonised in yoga, कर्मफलम् *karmaphalam :* the fruits of work, त्यक्त्वा *tyaktva :* having abondoned, नैष्ठिकीम् *naishtikim :* final (absorption in Atma), शान्तिम् *santim :* peace, आप्नोति *apnoti :* attains, अयुक्तः *ayuktah :* the non-united one, कामकारेण *kamkarena :* impelled by desire, फले *phale :* in the fruits, सक्तः *saktah :* attached, निबध्यते *nibadhyate :* is bound.

Substance : The harmonised *yogi*, abandoning the fruits of action attains final peace, while the non-united one impelled by desire for the fruits of action is bound.

Commentary : The harmanised *yogi* attains eternal peace because he is free from desire and attachment. The non-integrated man suffers bondage because his actions are impelled by desire for enjoyment. Freedom is attained by desirelessness, bondage is caused by desire. The perfected *karma yogi* enjoys the eternal peace of *Brahman* and the *Jnana yogi* also enjoys the peace of the Eternal. Peace, supreme peace, is the goal of the two types of *yoga*. Both lead to Self-realisation.

Peace is the direct result of non-attachment. All the restlessness, frustration, ill-will, hatred, and struggle are caused by attachment to worldly objects and thirst for pleasures. When the *yogi* discovers higher joy in *Atma* untained by any disturbing factors, he finds no relish for the lower pleasures of the material world. And this non-attachment leads to

supreme peace. So the aspirants should analyse the cause of suffering in the world, and when he analyses the problem, he would naturally find out that the attachments are the root cause for all the storms and tempests of his mind. Give up desire and attachment, peace is yours- This is the Lord's message.

Question : *What is the fruit of Nishkama Karma and why ?*

Answer : The peace of the Eternal is the fruit and the reason for it is non-attachment.

Question : *What is the fate of the man of desire and why ?*

Answer : He is bound by the wheel of *samsara* and the reason is desire.

Question : *What then is the cause of liberation and bondage?*

Answer : Non-attachment is the cause of liberation, and attachment is the cause of bondage.

Question : *What is the way to supreme peace ?*

Answer : Desirelessness.

The state of the Yogi who has mentally renounced all actions is described.

13. सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥

Sarvakarmani manasa samnyasya'ste sukham vasi ।
navadvare pure dehi nai'va kurvan na karayan ॥ 13

Meaning : वशी *vasi* : one of controlled senses, देही *dehi* : the embodied being, मनसा *manasa* : with the mind, सर्वकर्माणि *sarvakarmani:* all actions, संन्यस्य *sannyasya:* having abandoned, नैव कुर्वन् *na eva kurvan* : not doing anything at all, न कारयन् *na karayan* : not causing any action, नवद्वारे *navadvare* : in the nine-gated, पुरे *pure* : city (body), सुखम् *sukham* : happily, आस्ते *aste* : rests.

Substance : Mentally renouncing all actions and self-controlled, the embodied being rests happily in the nine-gated city (body) neither acting nor causing others to act.

Commentary : The principle of happiness in life is explained here. First and foremost, the senses should be brought under control. *Vasi* means a man of self-control. If the senses and mind are not under control, even the conquest of the whole world is of no avail. Man cannot be happy. Therefore having controlled the mind and the senses, the *yogi* rests happily in the body – (*Vasi sukham aste*).

The *yogi* should renounce all actions mentally. That is, he should give up the sense of doership and the attachment for the fruits of work. The body may work but the dweller in the body is completely at rest, because he knows that the mind and the senses are functioning according to their own nature, and he the Drik (seer) is just a witness. There is no identification of the Self with the functions of nature. So the principle is to abandon all actions in the mind. The body, according to its own nature goes on acting according to its own laws. This mental renunciation is *karma-Sannyasa*, and not abstaining from work as idlers and incapacitated persons do. When one attains this *karma-Sannyasa*, he rests peacefully in his own state. He neither acts nor causes anything else to act.

The individual self rests in *Atma* unattached to and unaffected by any thing taking place in and through the nine-gated city of the body.

In the nine-gated city : The body is described metaphysically as a city of nine gates-two eyes, two ears, two nasal passages, mouth, urethra and anus. The Self is the ruling monarch of this nine-gated city. In ancient times every great city had high gateways in different directions. When these gateways are fortified and strongly gaurded, the King remains safe and secure. But if they are undefended, enemies can easily enter and disturb the city. Material enjoyments and pleasures are the enemies who come in through the gate-ways of the senses, enter the mind, and shake the throne of the monarch,

harassing him in different ways. But the man of Self-control (*Vasi*) keeps those gate-ways closely guarded, and so he rests happily in his own state.

Question : *How can man attain happiness ?*

Answer : By self-control and mental renunciation of all actions, man attains happiness.

Question : *Is this renunciation physical or mental ?*

Answer : It is mental.

Work and the idea of personal agency are caused by Prakriti (Maya).

14. न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४

Na kartritvam na karmani lokasya srijati prabhuh ।
na karmaphala samyogam svabhavastu pravartate ॥ 14

Meaning : प्रभुः *prabhuh :* the Lord (Atma), लोकस्य *lokasya:* for this world, कर्तृत्वम् *kartritvam :* agency, न सृजति *na srijati :* creates not, कर्माणि *karmani :* actions, न *na (srijati) :* creates not, कर्मफलसंयोगम् *karmaphalasamyogam :* union of actions with fruits, न *na (srijati) :* creates not, स्वभावः तु *svabhavah tu:* but nature (past samskarams), प्रवर्तते *pravarta te :* leads to action, (causes agency, motion, and the fruits of action).

Substance : The Lord (*Atma*) does not create agency, nor action, nor the union of action and its fruit; but Nature leads to action.

Commentary : The Lord (*Atma*) has nothing to do with personal agency, or actions, or the union of action with its fruits. He does not direct man to do this or that. Nature carries on the whole of this universal drama according to its own laws. By the power of *Prakriti* man has attached himself to actions, and thinks that he is acting, enjoying, suffering, and that he is the doer. In fact it is not the real man that is the doer. The personal agent is a

spurious idea created by the power of *Maya.* Having thus forgotten his real nature, man has created for himself a wilderness of likes and dislikes, good and bad-evil desires, and those *samskaras* go on functioning in their own way through the variegated phenomina of life. To know this secret is Knowledge. When a man does evil, it is not the real Self that does evil, but man's nature. When a man does good, it is not the real Self that does good, but man's nature. So, the evil accummulated in one's nature should be counteracted by the good, and then one should rise above both good and evil in the realisation of *Atma.* The seeker need not be disheartened by the evil in him. It is his own making, and what he has done, he can undo also. Effort is needed in that direction for self-purification. This struggle is the natural order of life. The Lord has nothing to do with it. Man has to attain purification by his own effort. The Lord here states that personal agency, actions and their results are all conducted by the power of *Prakriti.*

Question : *Is the Lord concerned with the actions of man ?*

Answer : No.

Question : *Then what is the power that is creating these actions ?*

Answer : *Prakriti* (Nature). The natural tendencies of man carry on the drama of earthly life.

The Lord is not concerned with the good and bad done by man.

15. नादत्ते कस्यचित्पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ १५

Na'datte kasyachit papam na chai'va sukritam vibhuh ।
ajnanena'vritam jnanam tena muhyanti jantavah ॥ 15

Meaning : विभुः *vibhuh :* the Lord (Atma), कस्यचित् *kasyachit :* of any one, पापम् *papam :* evil, नादत्ते *nadatte :* does not receive, सुकृतं चैव *sukritamchaiva :* and also good

(does not receive), न *na :* not, अज्ञानेन *ajnanena :* by ignorance, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, आवृतम् *avritam :* is enveloped, तेन *tena :* by it (ignorance), जन्तवः *jantavah :* beings, मुह्यन्ति *mutyante :* are deluded.

Substance : The Lord does not receive either the evil or good of any one. Knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, and by it beings are deluded.

Commentary : The good and the bad done by man affect him only, God does not touch either. If man does good, he enjoys the fruits of his good work. If he does evil, he suffers the result of his bad actions. God has nothing to do with them. Thus the whole responsibility is placed on man himself, as the maker of his own destiny. It is utter foolishness to imagine that God is conferring happiness on some people and suffering on others. No. He does neither. Man suffers from his own evil deeds. God is the eternal witness of this wonderful human life, with all its passions, victories and defeats, pleasures and pains, loves and hatreds and so on. He is Sakshi (witness).

In the second line, the Lord explains how this so-called earthly life is carried on by all beings. Knowledge is covered up by ignorance and by this all beings are deluded. Every man in his real nature is the immortal Self, and not the perishable body. But by ignorance, man has come to think that he is the body. By this delusion, man is subjecting himself to all the shocks and ills of earthly life, and is bound to the wheel of birth and death. But this ignorance (*avidya*) though is without a beginning has an end. A remote mountain cave is filled with darkness from time immemorial, and yet it is shattered the moment a light is brought into it. Thus Knowledge when it flashes on the heart ends all ignorance in a fraction of a second. When man realises his real nature, ignorance is destroyed. Therefore it is the duty of every man to remove the veil of ignorance and know himself as the immortal Self. There is nothing new to be acquired. Man has only to take off the blinding mask and understand his own true nature.

Question : *What is the cause of man's sorrow ?*

Answer : Knowledge is covered up by ignoracne and hence man is deluded.

The way to remove ignorance is explained.

16. ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनः ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६

Jnanena tu tadajnanam yesham nasitam atmanah ।
tesham adityavajjnanam prakasayati tat param ॥ 16

Meaning : आत्मनः *atmanah :* of Atma, ज्ञानेनतु *jnanena tu :* but by knowledge, येषाम् *yesham :* whose, तदज्ञानम् *tat ajnanam :* that ignorance, नाशितम् *nasitam :* is destroyed, तेषाम् *tesham :* for them, ज्ञानम् *jnanam :* knowledge, अदित्यवत् *adityavat :* like the sun, तत्परम् *tat param :* The Brahman, Supreme Reality, प्रकाशयति *prakasayati :* reveals.

Substance : But for those whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge of *Atma* that Knowledge, like the sun, reveals the Supreme Brahman.

Commentary : In the previous verse, it is stated that knowledge is covered by ignorance, and so man suffers misery. Here the way to remove sorrow is shown. Ignorance is the cause of sorrow, and Knowledge alone could remove ignorance. Knowledge of *Atma* is to be acquired by spiritual practices like hearing, contemplation, meditation etc. And such Knowledge reveals the Supreme Being, Brahman, just as the Sun reveals the objects in the sense-world.

Like the sun : When thick clouds spread over the sky, the Sun is hidden and the world is plunged in darkness. Powerful winds drive away the clouds, and immediately the glorious light of the Sun is revealed. Thereby all the objects of the sense-world become visible to us. Even so, the light of *Atma* is covered up by ignorance. When this ignorance is removed by knowledge, *Atma* shines forth with all its glory.

It should be clearly understood that *Atma* is not something to be created by anybody by some kind of spiritual discipline. *Atma* is already there, unaffected by anything, just as the Sun is there even when the clouds cover him up. Only the covering is to be taken away. *Atma* is unveiled.

When it is said that Knowledge causes *Atma* to shine forth, it does not mean that *Atma* is illumined by knowledge. *Atma* is Self-luminous. It is unlike material objects which are not self-luminous but which shine by the light of the Sun. *Atma* does not require anything else to illumine itself. It illumines all.

When ignorance (*Jivabuddhi*) is destroyed, *Atma* is experienced, and that is Knowledge.

Let us take the illustration of a lamp kept under a pot. When the pot covers it, the lamp is hidden, and light is not seen. When the pot is broken, the light of the lamp shines forth. The covering of ignorance is shattered by Knowledge and then the light of *Atma* is unveiled by His own original power.

Either by *Nishkama karma*, or by devotion or by *Dhyana* or by all these methods put together man has to obtain Knowledge of the real Self to overcome the sorrows of his earthly existence.

It is to be noted that this Knowledge is free for all humanity to secure without distinction of caste, creed, race, colour or sex. Each soul is potentially divine. Whoever breaks through the clouds of ignorance will come face to face with the glorious Sun of *Atma*.

Each individual has the light of *Atma* in himself shining like the Sun. Even the light of the Sun is only a reflection of the light of *Atma*.

Question : *How is ignorance destroyed ?*

Answer : By the Knowledge of *Brahman*.

Question : *What is revealed when knowledge comes ?*

Answer : *Atma* which is the essence of the light of Knowledge shines forth (experienced).

The sage who has acquired Knowledge of the Self has no rebirth.

17. तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ १७

Tadbuddhayas tadatmanas tannisthas tatparayanah ।
gacchantyapunaravrittim jnananirdhutakalmashah ॥ 17

Meaning : तद्बुद्धयः *tadbuddhayah :* with intellect absorbed in that, तदात्मानः *tadatmanah :* their self being That, तन्निष्ठाः *tannishtah :* established in That, तत्परायणाः *tatparayanah :* having That as their goal, ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः *jnananirdhuta–kalmashah :* their sins dispelled by Knowledge, अपुनरावृत्तिम् *apunaravrittim :* to the birthless and deathless state, गच्छन्ति *gacchanti :* go.

Substance : With their intellect absorbed in That, their Self being That, established in that, they go from whence there is no return and their sins are dispelled by knowledge.

Commentary : The realisation of *Brahman* being the final goal of all spiritual practices, what is the duty of the aspirant ? He should think of that at all times, he should merge himself in That, he should be firmly rooted in That, and he should have no other thing except That as the sole refuge and aim. Such a man alone can realise *Brahman*. It is a psychological truth that man becomes That which he contemplates. By ignorance man is contemplating *samsara*, and so he is bound by it by the effect of his own absorption in it. Now the *sadhana* should be made in the opposite direction. Mind should contemplate the Supreme Reality, the freedom of the Self, and if this is done constantly till the whole personality is filled with that, Then the *Atma* becomes manifest as the Reality in man. It is true that the mind cannot all of a sudden become absorbed in That. The mind oscillates between the objective world on the one side, and *Atma* on the other. But constant, unremitting and intense practice will fix the direction of the mind towards *Atma*. All great men

have gone through this practice. They have concentrated all their energies in *Atma*, and dedicated their whole being to That. And thus they have realised the Supreme.

To the birthless and deathless state : '*Punaravritti*' means taking birth again and becoming bound by *samsara*. Birthlessness (*apunaravritti*) is the state of final emancipation.

Sins dispelled by Knowledge : Who shall attain that state? Those who are free from sin and evil, free from ignorance and delusion, attain that state. How can sin be destroyed? By the Knowledge of *Atma*. So long as there is the least trace of evil, the light is not revealed. So the enveloping darkness of evil should be shattered by Knowledge. Constant thought and meditation on *Atma* brings the spiritual knowledge to man.

Is it not true that the man engaged in worldly pursuits, attains success by the concentration of all his energies on that object which he desires to acquire? Day and night, the wealthy are adding to their possessions. Most of the people are spending their whole life and energy in acquiring lands, houses, positions, name and fame. They come to possess these things by the very force of their efforts. And yet they still live in a state of fear, and suffer terrible torture of the mind. If they can turn their interest and energy towards the spiritual quest, they can easily acquire that Knowledge by which they can ever afterwards live a life of fearlessness, joy, and perfect freedom. *Atma-Jnana* is the greatest acquisition for a human being, because by it he transcends all the fears and sorrows of life, and lives in restful peace, bliss and blessedness.

Question : *What is Moksha* ?

Answer : It is the birthless and deathless state of the highest bliss.

Question : *Who can acquire it* ?

Answer : The man who is free from sin and evil can acquire it.

Question : *How is evil destroyed* ?

Answer : Evil is dispelled by Knowledge.

Question : *How is Knowledge acquired* ?

Answer : By thinking of That, by merging in That, by taking refuge in That, by having That as his supreme goal, man acquires *Atma-Jnana.*

The sage of equal vision in described.

18. विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८

Vidyavinayasampanne brahmane gavi hastini ।
suni chai'va svapake cha panditah samadarsinah ॥ 18

Meaning : विद्याविनयसंपन्ने *vidyavinayasampanne* : endowed with knowledge and humility, ब्राह्मणे *brahmane* : towards Brahmana, गवि *gavi* : cow, हस्तिनि *hastini* : elephant, शुनि चैव *suni cha eva* : and also the dog, श्वपाके च *svapake cha* : and the outcaste who feeds on dog's flesh, समदर्शिनः *samadarsinah* : are of equal vision, पण्डिताः *panditah* : the sages.

Substance : The sages look with equal eye on a *Brahmana* endowed with knowledge and humility, on a cow, on an elephant, on a dog and on the outcaste who feeds on dog's flesh.

Commentary : Sages who have aquired *Brahmajnana* see everything as *Brahman*. In all the varied manifestations of nature, they see the underlying substratum (i. e.) *Atma*, and so they do not make any distinction between one thing and another. For them all that exists, whatever the name and form may be, is made of one substance - *Brahman* (*Atma*). So they have love and compassion for all the creatures without distinction of high or low, caste and creed, and so on. The *Brahmana* here stands for the highest purity. The out caste (*swapaka*) represents the lowest order of human being. The sage looks upon both with an equal eye, because the background for the highest spiritual gaint and the meanest wretch is *Brahman* and nothing else. Is the vision of the sage confined to humanity only? No. His vision embraces all the created beings. So the elephants, dogs the cows are mentioned to represent the animal kingdom.

It means animals, birds, reptiles, and all living creatures without any exception at all, are included in the universal vision of the sage. All are *Brahman.* One who looks upon all these equally is the man of real Knowledge.

Each man is looking at things from a particular plane of vision. The most ignorant man looks upon objects only from the physical plane. He considers only the colour, stature, race, caste and so on. This is bodily outlook '*dehadrishti*' – the mere apprehension of the outermost fringes of all beings, the mere flesh and blood estimate. They are pleased or displeased according to these physical distinctions. The second class of persons look upon objects from the mental plane. They consider the character of man, his mental make up, his intellectual powers, and other talents which are exhibited in him. This is mental-outlook (*manodrishti*). The highest class of people look upon all things from the spiritual plane, and they find God or the Reality in every one. They penetrate to the innermost recesses of the heart through the outer coverings of the mind and body. Their vision is that of the One *Brahman* (*Atma*) being the essence of all things. This is Atmic outlook (*Atmadrishti*). All that exists is God. Out of that one substance, all the apparent distinctions and differences of name and form are created by the power of *Maya.* If a number of golden ornaments are given for sale to a jeweller, he sees them all as gold, and weighs and values them accordingly. All pots are made of earth. The reality in all of them is the earth. Thus the sages see the all-pervading *Atma* every where. Hence they possess equal vision. This is *Jnana.*

Love for all is the highest attribute of God. The *Jnani* has such love extended to all beings. This is the universality of the *Gita* message. All artificial limitations are transcended by the realisation of the Self. Brotherhood of man is no doubt a great ideal. But the love of the *Jnani* does not stop there. He finds the same Self in all beings. The ultimate goal is cosmic love, the identification of one's self with all that exists. In the human organism there are different organs, like hands, legs, eyes etc. If one of the limbs is affected, the whole

body feels the pain. So it is that the *Jnani* feels pained when any part of the universe suffers. We come across exceptional men who have reached this state, who take upon themselves the sorrows and sufferings of other beings, just because they see the same Self in all.

This universal love is the test of *jnana.* To know that *Atma* is the one indwelling principle of creation as a whole is to enter the plane of cosmic love and unity. In this the application of the *Vedantic* doctrine of oneness in practical life is clearly declared.

Question : *Who is a wise man ?*

Answer : He who looks with an equal eye on all beings is the man of real wisdom.

The excellence of Jnana is declared.

19. इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९

Ihai 'va tair jitah sargo yesham samye sthitam manah ।
nirdosham hi samam brahma tasmad brahmani te sthitah॥ 19

Meaning : येषां *yesham :* whose, मनः *manah :* mind, साम्ये *samye :* in equality, स्थितम् *sthitam :* is established, तैः *taih :* by them, इहैव *iha eva :* here only, even in this world (living in this body), सर्गः *sargah :* samsara, birth and death, जितः *jitah :* is conquered, हि *hi :* because, ब्रह्म *brahma :* brahman, निर्दोषम् *nirdosham :* free from evil, समं *samam :* equal, तस्मात् *tasmat :* therefore, ते *te :* they, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani:* in Brahman, स्थिताः *sthitah :* (are) established.

Substance : Even here (while living in this body) birth and death (*samsara*) are overcome by those whose mind is established in equality; for Brahman is free from evil and is balanced, and therefore they are established in Brahman.

Commentary : Mind is the cause of bondage or freedom. If the mind is corrupt and unbalanced, it is bondage. If the mind is pure and equal, it is freedom. Therefore the Lord declares that the man who keeps his mind pure and balanced conquers the bondage of *samsara*. While living in this body, the man becomes free - a *Jivan mukta* - the living free.

The reason for it is that *Atma*, the Self, is free from evil and is always balanced. Who - so - ever acquires these attributes of *Atma* have their life and being in *Atma*. Like things mix together and not unlike things. Water mixes with water and not with oil. Oil mixes with oil and not with milk. So to become *Atma*, one should cultivate *Atma dharma*. Two attributes are mentioned here as *Atma dharma* - purity and balance. When these qualities are acquired, man realises Brahman.

When the mind acquires purity, objectlessness, balance equal to that of *Atma*, man attains emancipation.

Moksha is purity of mind illumined by Knowledge. If one keeps the mind pure and balanced, he is free, now and here, and not elsewhere and at a distant time. There are no conditions of time and place. Wherever he is and whatever he is, if one acquires purity and balance of mind he attains freedom.

Mind established in equality : It means that the mind is balanced, free from the unsettling waves of attraction and repulsion while moving through the objective world. This balance is achieved by the *Jnani* as he is able to perceive the one Self in all beings. So much so there is no mental disturbance at all for him.

The highest state of freedom could be achieved while living in this body. This gives the greatest hope for suffering humanity. It is not after death that their freedom is attained. It is attained here and now by the aspirant whose mind is free and balanced.

Question : *Who can overcome the bondage of samsara* ?

Answer : He whose mind is pure and equal overcomes *Samsara*.

Question : *What is the way to cross over the ills of life* ?

Answer : (1) Purity of mind, (2) firmness and balance, (3) looking with an equal eye on all beings-these are the means to peace and bliss.

Question : *What is the nature of Brahman* ?

Answer : Purity and harmony.

Question : *When would man attain Moksha* ?

Answer : When the mind is pure and balanced, man attains *Moksha.*

Further attributes of Brahma-Jnani are mentioned.

20. न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ २०

Na prahrishyet priyam prapya
no 'dvijet prapya cha 'priyam'
sthirabuddhirasammudho
brahmavid brahmani sthitah '

Meaning: स्थिरबुद्धिः *sthirabuddhih :* of steady intellect, असंमूढः *asammudhah :* not deluded, ब्रह्मणि *brahmani :* in Brahman, स्थितः *sthitah :* is established, ब्रह्मवित् *brahmavit :* the knower of Brahman, प्रियं प्राप्य *priyam prapya :* obtaining the pleasant, न प्रहृष्येत् *na prahrishyet :* not elated, अप्रियम् च *apriyam cha :* the unpleasant and, प्राप्य *prapya :* having got, नोद्विजेत् *no dvijet :* not troubled.

Substance : The man of steady intellect, undeluded, knower of Brahman, established in Brahman, should not be elated having obtained the pleasant and should not be troubled having got the unpleasant.

Commentary : Further attributes of the *Jnani* are mentioned here. The wise and the ignorant could easily be distinguished by their conduct, in the same way as we could

distinguish a blind man by his gait. The knower of Brahman is untroubled by the occurance of unpleasant things, nor is he elated when good things come to him. His intellect does not waver in wear and woe.

He knows by direct vision that worldly life as we see and live it with a deluded mind and confused intellect, is a dream that has no reality about it. He knows that it is a mirage, appearing to be full of water and beautiful, but only a sandy desert. Those who know the mirage are no longer deluded by its apparent attraction. In the same way, to the knower of Brahman the world is unreal (*Midhya*) from the spiritual point of view. So he is not moved by joy or sorrow by the diverse pattern of human existence.

Of steady intellect, not deluded (*sthirabudhih-asammudhah:*) The purified intellect of the knower of Brahman is firm and immovable, because it has transcended all fictitious notion of the world, pleasures and pains, etc. The intellect of the ignorant man is shrouded in delusion, and so, like a weather-cock it is unsteady and turns round and round by every gust of wind. The light of *Atma* illumines the whole universe, and the wise man knows what is real and what is unreal with absolute clearness.

From this we understand that the aspirant who practises steadiness of mind, who keeps his intellect equal and balanced, unites himself with Brahman.

Question : *What are the attributes of the knower of Brahman ?*

Answer : He does not rejoice when good things happen and he is not troubled when bad things occur. He is steady in mind, and free from delusion.

21. बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यत्सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१

Bahyasparseshvasaktatma vindatyatmani yat sukham ।
sa brahmayaga yuktatma sukhamakshayam asnute ॥ 21

Meaning : बाह्यस्पर्शेषु *bahyasparseshu* : contact with external objects, असक्तात्मा *asktatma* : one whose mind is unattached, आत्मनि *Atmani* : in Atma, यत् सुखम् *yat sukham* : which happiness, विन्दति *vindati* : finds, सः *sah* : he, ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा *brahmayogayuktatma* : united in mind with Brahman, सुखम् *sukham* : happiness, अक्षयम् *akshayam* : imperishable, अश्नुते *asnute* : enjoys.

Substance : With mind unattached to external contacts he finds happiness in *Atma* and with mind united with Brahman (*Atma*) in meditation, he enjoys imperishable happiness.

Commentary . Eternal happiness is only in the Self and no where else. All other kinds of happiness arising from the contact of the senses with the external world are only short-lived and mixed with pain. They come and go. They are only the reflected joys of the Self. Real joy is only in *Atma*. The course of all happiness is inside and not outside. Not believing this truth, much less knowing it, the ignorant are deluded by thinking that happiness is coming to them through external objects. The dog biting the bone bruises its own mouth and licks its own blood thinking that it is coming from the bone. So is the ignorant man who runs after the elusive pleasures of life and is constantly cheated by them. Even after repeated experience he does not change his attitude. It has become a habitual way of thinking for the common man.

The wise man who has enquired into the nature of things develops a different attitude. He comes to know that he is himself the source of all happiness, and so he has no attachment for the pleasures derived through the senses from the objective world. Knowing this, his mind naturally turns inwards into the Self. Otherwise, the mind cannot remain steady when it is pulled out by the distractions of the sense-world. So, first of all, there should be a clear understanding of the ephemeral character of sense-pleasures and the pain caused by them. Then comes dispassion (*vairagya*) – rejection of sense-pleasures. The less is sacrificed for the greater, the transitory is sacrificed for the eternal, and reflected joy is given up for real joy. From this verse we understand three important ideas :

(1) Happiness is not outside. It is inside, in *Atma.*

(2) External pleasures are short-lived and mixed with sorrow.

(3) Sense pleasures are obstructing the free flow of the bliss of Brahman. He who runs after them cannot experience the bliss of Brahman.

The painful nature of sense-pleasures is explained.

22. ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ २२

Ye hi samsparsaja bhoga duhkhayonaya eva te ।
adyantavantah kaunteya na teshu ramate budhah ॥ 22

Meaning: कौन्तेय *Kaunteya :* O Arjuna! संस्पर्शजाः *samsparsajah :* born of contact of the senses with objects, भोगाः *bhogah :* enjoyments, ये *ye :* which, ते *te :* they, दुःखयोनयः एव हि *dukhayonayah eva hi :* (all) the source of pain and sorrow indeed only, आद्यन्तवन्तः *adyantavantah :* having beginning and end (short-lived), बुधः *budhah :* the wise, तेषु *teshu :* in them, न रमते *na ramate :* do not rejoice.

Substance: Those enjoyments born of external contacts are themselves indeed the source of pain only; they have a beginning and end; the wise do not rejoice in them.

Commentary: The pleasure derived from sense objects are not real and enduring. They appear to give pleasure superficially, but they contain in themselves the seeds and germs of pain and sorrow. Therefore the Lord describes them as '*dukhayonayah*', (the source of pain and sorrow). The elders say that the pleasure derived from outside is only a drop and from it arises suffering as huge as a mountain. Since these pleasures are short-lived and worthless, the wise have no relish for them.

The source of pain and sorrow: Sense-pleasures contain in their womb the seeds of sorrow and suffering. He who

indulges in them should also suffer pain and sorrow arising from them. Man's life is a bundle of pleasures and pains coming and going in an endless chain. These same pleasures have been many times in the previous births, and they will recur many times in the future also. When X rays are focussed over the body they penetrate the outer covering and photograph the inner contents of the body. So also, the purified intellect of the spiritual seeker is able to discover the unseen germs of pain and suffering in the womb of sense-pleasures. So he shuns them like poison. They do not rejoice in them (*na teshu ramate budhah*). The ignorant man is attracted by the glitter and glamour of sense-pleasures, and fall into the pit of suffering. He is caught like the foolish fish that bites the flesh without seeing the hook behind.

From this verse we understand two evils arising from material pleasures (1) They contain in immense the seeds of sorrow and suffering, (2) They are short-lived, unlike that joy which is found in *Atma* by the man of Knowledge. The ***Atmic*** joy has not the least taint of sorrow or pain in it. It is eternal. If sense-pleasure is like a lamp, the joy of *Atma* is like the sun. The lamp is blown out at any time but the Sun shines forever. If sense-pleasures are like a pool, the joy of *Atma* is like the ocean. The pool is dried up, but not the ocean. Knowing this, the wise do not go in for material pleasures. Such one is the knowing man - (*budhah.*)

It is within the experience of every thoughtful man that the sense-pleasures corrupt the body and mind and lead to suffering and misery. The pleasures of drink, the ecstasies of lust, the adventures of gambling, the greed of accumulated wealth, the fear and glamour of position-have been the cause of ill-health, loss of vitality, bankruptcy, suicidal jealousies and hatred and all the restless passions of worldly people. Materialism, the clinging to the body as the be-all and end-all of life has destroyed mankind and deprived it of their legitimate claim to pure joy-Ananda, which is man's birth-right. The denial of spritual values on all sides and the consequent strife in the heart of man have rendered life for millions of people a prolonged fitful fever.

Question : *What is the nature of sense-pleasures ?*

Answer : They are the source of sorrow and suffering. They are short-lived.

Question : *So what will the wise man do ?*

Answer : He rejects the sense pleasures and seeks for the joy of the spirit.

The Lord points the way to happiness in this world.

23. शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक्शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ २३

Saknoti'hai'va yah sodhum prak sariravimokshanat ।
kamakrodhodbhavam vegam sa yuktah sa sukhi narah ॥ 23

Meaning : यः *yah :* who, शरीरविमोक्षणात् *sariravimokshanat :* release from the body (in death), प्राक् *prak :* before, इहैव *iha eva :* even in this world, कामक्रोधोद्भवम् *kamakrodho-dbhavam :* born of desire and anger, वेगम् *vegam :* impulse, सोढुं *sodhum :* to endure, शक्नोति *saknoti:* is able, सः नरः *sah narah :* that man, युक्तः *yuktah :* united, सः *sah :* he, सुखी *sukhi :* is the happy.

Substance : He who is able to endure the impulse of desire and anger even in this world before the fall of the body, is the harmonised, and he is the happy man.

Commentary : One major tenet of the Gita which is repeatedly affirmed by the Lord, is that the peace and happiness of spiritual life is to be attained here and now, even in this life, while living in the embodied state.

The Gita, as it has been pointed out in the introduction, teaches a way of life which can be practised with advantage by the individual and by the society. What is the way to secure peace and happiness ? How can man enjoy undisturbed and unbroken bliss ? This question confronts everyone. Consciously or unconsciously man is seeking for happiness every moment of his life; The Lord states the position with absolute clarity and perspicuity. The key to happiness is placed in one's own hands. The mansion of peace is open to all. But one should understand what peace is and how it could be found.

This world and the human organism is best fitted to attain peace and Truth. This is the grandest opportunity for spiritual *sadhana*. The other worlds are only places where the effects of actions done here are experienced. No *sadhana* is possible there. This world is the '*Karmabhumi*'. So whatever progress could be claimed by individual effort should be effected here only.

Before the fall of the body : The idea 'here only' (*ihaiva*) is elaborated by this explanatory phrase. It means before the body falls (i. e.) before death. The Lord exhorts mankind to conquer lust *(Kama)* and anger (*Krodha*) before the body falls. While living and discharging the duties and responsibilities of life, one should overcome these two fatal enemies. It is foolish to postpone the issue to a future birth. Who knows what birth one is going to have, whether that of man or beast ? So this wonderful opportunity should not be lost. That which perishes is called the body – '*siryate iti sariram*'. The tenure of life is uncertain. No one can say when he shall be called off from the stage of earthly life. Even if one lives upto ripe old age that will not be of much use. When the physical and mental powers are declined, what spiritual effort can one make ? *Sadhana* will become impossible in old age. So when people are young, when the mind's power is at its height, when the body is capable of enduring the rigours of discipline, when weakness does not set in, when the clouds of cares and anxieties do not overcast the mind, when defeatism and frustration have not knocked out the foundation of human personality – when man is young, strong, hopeful and idealistic, *sadhana* should be done. If one fails to do so, great difficulties would overtake him.

Among the six enemies, *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya,* - the first two only are mentioned here. The rest are included in them. They are powerful enemies. The seeker should watch their movements with constant vigilence.

Impulse : The impulse of *Kama* and *Krodha* should be resisted. These impulses are roused suddenly and are highly irresistible. So the impulse should not be allowed to rise in the mind. Their seeds remain dormant in the mind and they should not be afforded any occasion to sprout and spread out and disturb the mind. These impure impulses should not come up to the surface, and thus the mind remains quiet and peaceful. When *Atma* is directly perceived, the seeds also are burnt up, and then man is perfectly free.

The result of such Self-control is happiness and absorption in the Self. There is no happiness whatever even if man possesses other acquisitions, talents and powers.

Is able : By devotion and dispassion man can conquer these enemies.

We understand three important ideas from this verse : (1) Before the fall of the body, one should conquer these enemies. (2) The most important aspect of *sadhana* is the conquest of *Kama* and *Krodha*. (3) Only after the conquest of these enemies can a man attain complete happiness.

The man who has conquered the evil forces is able to gain introspection that leads to Brahman.

24. योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ २४

Yo 'ntahsukho 'ntararamas tatha 'ntarjyotir eva yah |
sa yogi brahmanirvanam brahmabhuto 'dhigacchati || 24

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, अन्तःसुखः *antahssukhah* : finds happiness within, अन्तरारामः *Antararamah* : rejoices within, तथा *tatha* : also, यः *yah* : who, अन्तर्ज्योतिः एव च *antarjyotih eva cha* : illumined within and even, सः योगी *sah yogi* : that sage, ब्रह्मभूतः *brahmabhutah* : becoming Brahman, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : the freedom of Brahman (Moksha,) अधिगच्छति *adhigacchati* : attains.

Substance : He who finds happiness within, delights within, and illumined within, that sage becoming *Brahman* attains absolute perfection.

Commentary : The highest state of *Brahmanubhuti* and *Moksha* is mentioned here. It is evident from the previous verses that all outgoing impulses should be restricted, all external pleasures given up, and all sense-enjoyments discorded, before *Brahman* is realised. The outgoing mind should be turned inwards. Introspection, exploration of the inner regions of the mind and its source should be cultivated and developed. This is possible only when the windows of the senses are closed, and the mind is not in contact with sense-objects. If one gives up desires, the impulses of the mind for sensual enjoyments, possessions and all external things, then will he acquire the inner vision to see the Self and abide in it.

Finds happiness within : The common man cannot find the happiness of the Self within. He imagines that he is deriving happiness from external objects. The truth is that all happiness is only in the Self, and what one thinks as happiness coming from outside is only the reflected happiness (*Ananda*) of the Self. The pleasures of the senses are short-lived, and contain in themselves the germs of pain and sorrow. To know this is very difficult, and man errs repeatedly. And yet the time should come when he realises the foolishness of running after silly sensual pleasures, and then the march back to his original state begins. When he finds the inner source of untainted happiness, he never again enters the sense-world.

Rejoices within : The world is the play ground of the senses and the mind. But the wise finds that the so-called enjoyments and pleasures are unreal and short-lived. So he goes into himself and is delighted with the pure joy of the Self. There he finds the full realisations of all conceivable pleasures in the one joy of the Self. He forever delights within himself.

Illuminated within : The senses function by the external light of the Sun and the Moon. Without it, the world is a dark mass. But the Sun himself shines by the light of *Atma*.

The whole universe shines by the light of *Atma*. The eye is illumined by the intellect, and the intellect is illumined by *Atma*. It is *Atma* that is revealing itself as the diverse manifestations of light in the universe. Knowing this, the sage is illumined by *Atma*, the source of all light everywhere. He is light, and the light is within.

In this way, abandoning all the deluded attachment for the objective world, realising *Atma* as the foundation of all bliss, and the source of all light, meditating on That, the wise man becomes one with *Brahman* and attains *Moksha*.

Question : *Who can attain Brahman ?*

Answer : He who gives up attachment to the objective world, and finds all happiness and light in *Atma* within, attains union with *Brahman*.

The qualities of the sage who has attained the supreme freedom of Brahman are stated.

25. लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ २५

Labhante brahmanirvanam rishayah kshinakalmashah
chinnadvaidha yatatmanah sarvabhutahite ratah 25

Meaning : क्षीणकल्मषाः *kshinakalmashah* : (sages) whose sins are destroyed, छिन्नद्वैधाः *cchinnadvaidhah* : dualities torn asunder, यतात्मानः *yatatmanah* : self-controlled, सर्वभूतहितेरताः *sarvabhutahiteratah* : rejoicing in the welfare of all beings, ऋषयः *rishayah* : sages, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *brahmanirvanam* : oneness with Brahman, लभन्ते *labhante* : obtains.

Substance : Sages whose sins are destroyed, whose dualities are torn asunder, who are self-controlled, who rejoice in the well-being of others, attain union with *Brahman* (*Moksha*).

Commentary : Who is a Rishi ? One who has mastered the senses and mind, who is established in *Atma* is a *Rishi*. It is a position, a title, that any one can acquire by *tapas*. It is something like a degree which young students acquire after going through a particular course of study. So, any one endowed with character and singleness of purpose can obtain the title of a *Rishi*. No one is precluded from making the attempt. The ignorant man of today may become the sage of the future. Constant *sadhana* transforms the common human being into a sage of wisdom, world-honoured and one with God Himself. (*Brahmavit brahmaiva bhavati*). Four characteristics of the sage are mentioned here.

Whose sins are destroyed : In the course of innumerable births man may have committed a number of sins prohibited by the *Sastras*, e. g – theft, drunkenness, adultery, murder etc. So the mind is full of impurities. These should be destroyed by *Nishkama Karma*, devotion and Knowledge. Then the very sinner becomes a sage.

Whose dualities are torn asunder : The illusion of manifoldness should be transcended by the perception of unity in all things. All doubts would be cleared when the Reality is seen as it is.

Self-controlled : The *Rishi* has mastered all impulses and powers of the body, mind and intellect. Perfect self-control is the only way to Self-realisation.

Rejoicing in the welfare of all beings : What is the effect of *Brahma Jnana* ? – universal love. Knowledge in action is love. The sage knows that there is only one Supreme Self, and that is manifesting as the many. The same Self that is in him is also in everything. When one realises this truth, what will be his attitude towards other beings ? – Love for all. He cannot injure others, he cannot be jealous others. He has no fear of anything. The 'others' do not exist for him, because he has perceived the unity of all beings, and he is himself the all. The test of man's wisdom is here. He is full of compassion. His heart overflows with pity. When the sage moves in the world, the one attribute of the purified heart would be love. God is worshipped not only as the All-powerful but as the All-

merciful. God is love. Great sages have preached and practised universal love as the highest law for humanity.

Question : *Who can attain Moksha* ?

Answer : Those whose sins are destroyed, whose doubts and dualities are cleared, who have self-mastery and universal love attain *Moksha.*

Question : *Who is a Rishi* ?

Answer : One who possesses the above-mentioned qualities is a Rishi.

26. कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ २६

Kama krodha viyuktanam yatinam yatachetasam ।
abhito brahmanirvanam vartate viditatmanam ॥ 26

Meaning : कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां *kamakrodhaviyuktanam :* to those free from desire and anger, यतचेतसाम् *yatachetasam :* who have controlled their thoughts, विदितात्मनाम् *viditatmanam :* who have acquired Knowledge of Atma, यतीनाम् *yatinam :* to the Self-controlled ascetics, ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् *Brahmanirvanam :* Absolute freedom, अभितः *abhitah :* on all sides (in the embodied as well as disembodied state, वर्तते *vartante :* exists.

Substance : To the self-controlled sages who are free from desire and wrath, who have controlled their thoughts, who have realised the Self, absolute freedom exists on all sides.

Commentary : Three important qualities of the sage are mentioned here :—

(1) Abdandoning of desire and anger (i. e.) destruction of all tendencies (*vasanakshaya*).

(2) Control of mind (i. e.) destruction of the mind (*manonasa*).

(3) Knowledge of *Atma* (*tattvajnana*). The sage with these three qualities enjoys the bliss of absolute freedom at all times, in all places, and under all

circumstances. By the Knowledge of *Atma,* all the tendencies (*samskaras*) of the mind are removed, and the mind becomes non-existent. *Moksha* is not for the idle and lethargic. Hence the word '*Yati*' is used here. '*Yati*' means one who sacrifies everything for a great ideal. The ideal of realisation is achieved only by a great deal of effort. So having faith in the words of the *Sastras* and the *Guru*, let the seeker strive for the speedy realisation of spiritual freedom.

Constant meditation on *Atma* – the pure and perfect, will gradually purify the mind of all its evil *samskaras.* By knowing firmly that the objective world (*drisya*) is unreal, man overcomes the temptation for sense-pleasures and the consequent agitations of desire and anger.

The mind is impure as it has absorbed all evil tendencies through a number of births in a state of ignorance. The fire of Knowledge should burn up these tendencies and purify the mind which usually functions in *tamas* and *rajas.* Pure *sattva* is to be acquired by Knowledge of *Atma.* The mind is the axle on which the vast machine of *samsara* rotates endlessly, When the mind moves, the world moves. When the mind is not, the world is not. The impure mind sees the world as a vast battle-field of conflicting passions. The purified mind sees it as *Atma.* The devotee sees the world as the Lord. So the mind should be purified and kept under control by knowing that which is beyond it. *Atmajnana* implies a deep enquiry into the real nature of man. By such internal investigation, one comes to understand that he is not the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect, but that he is the one 'Self', the *Drik*, pure Knowledge. The seeker should constantly hold on to the Reality, which is pure and changeless, knowing by direct experience that what changes is only the picture of the world.

It has already been said that when a man attains '*Brahmi sthiti*', he does not fall into delusion again. Hence it is declared that the man who attains '*Brahma nirvanam*' exists in a state of absolute freedom and bliss at all times, in all places, under all

circumstances. He is liberated when he holds the body or drops it. He lives always in freedom.

Question: *Who attains Brahmanirvana ?*

Answer : The man of mind-control, free from desire and anger, who has Self-knowledge, attains *Moksha*. Only men of great *sadhana* can attain that state.

Question : *When is he free ?*

Answer : Freedom exists for him everywhere and at all times.

The process of meditation is explained, and the everlasting freedom of the Jnani stated.

27. स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७

28. यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २७

Sparsan kritva bahir bahyams
chaksuschai'va'ntare bhrivoh ।
pranapanau samau kritva
nasabhyantaracharinau ॥ 27

Yatendriya manobuddhir munir moksha parayanah ।
vigateccha bhaya krodho yah sada mukta eva sah ॥ 28

Meaning : यः *yah* : who, बाह्यान् स्पर्शान् *bahyan sparsan* : impressions coming from external objects like colour, sound etc., बहिः कृत्वा *bahih kritva* : having turned out, चक्षुः *chakshuh* eye (gaze), भ्रुवोः अन्तरे एव कृत्वा *bhruvoh antara eva kritva* : in the centre of the brows only concentrating, नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ *nasabhyantaracharinau* : breath moving in and out, प्राणापानौ *prapanau* : the incoming and outgoing breath, समौ च कृत्वा *samau cha kritva cha*: and having balanced and, यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिः *yatendriyamanobuddhah* : with senses, mind, intellect controlled, विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधः *vigateckhabhayakrodhah* : free from desire, fear and anger, मोक्षपरायणः *mokshaparayanah* : aspiring for Moksha, मुनिः *munih* : sage (thinking of Atma), सः *saha* : he, सदा *sada* : always, मुक्त एव *muktah eva* : is free indeed.

Substance : The sage who has turned away all external impressions, fixing his gaze in the centre of the brows, controlling the incoming and outgoing breath rhythmically, keeping the senses, the mind and the intellect controlled, free from desire, fear and hatred, aspiring for the highest freedom indeed enjoys freedom always.

Commentary : The field of sense-activity is the external world. All sense-contacts are in the outside world. What right have they to enter the inner domain of man's heart? So thinking, the wise man prevents the entry of these impressions, and if they stealthily enter, they are pushed out at once. The foolish man allows them to come in and is enslaved by them. So the spiritual aspirant equipped with renunciation should put up the board 'No admission' at the gate-ways of the senses. It is like a country keeping strong border petrols on its frontiers to prevent incursions from enemy forces.

Having turned away from all sense-contacts, the sage centres the gaze of meditation in the middle of the eye-brows. This is called in *yogic* terminology the '*Khechari Mudra*'. If one meditates with eyes open, the mind may be distracted by sense-attractions. If he closes the eyes there is the danger of sinking into sleep (*tamas*). So with eyes half closed, the sage fixes the gaze in the centre of the eye-brows. In the science of *Yoga*, this spot is called '*Ajnachakra*'. Others concentrate on the tip of the nose or on the '*sahasrara*'. That practice which is agreeable to the aspirant may be followed. The aim is to prevent the mind from going out and fixing it in the Self within.

Having balanced the breath : For most people the incoming and outgoing breaths are not rhythmical and balanced. The flow of breath in and out is irregular, To make the breath regular and balanced by the practise of *Pranayama* is good for

bodily health and concentration of mind. It is one of the practices of the *Ashtanga Yoga*. The *prana* and the mind are closely interlinked. If one is controlled, the other is also controlled, without any particular effort. So control of breath is a necessary practice to bring the roving mind to a state of stillness. So the *Sastras* have prescribed breath-control as an important aspect of *sadhana*.

With senses, mind and intellect controlled : It has already been declared that *Atma* is beyond the senses, the mind and the intellect.

Aspiring for liberation : The yearning for freedom from the bonds of *samsara* is the first qualifying condition of the spiritual aspirant. If one desires *Moksha* with all his heart he will certainly have it. Is he ready to renounce the foolish pleasures of the objective world? If so, the yearning for the Supreme gathers force and momentam. The biographies of sages and devotees reveal the intense longing they had for Truth, for God.

Free from desire, fear and anger : Freedom from desire, fear, and hatred is the hall-mark of the sage. These three are the leaders of the host of enemies in spiritual life. If they are suppressed the others are easily eliminated. The Lord emphasises the need for overcoming these weaknesses many times.

The sage possessing the above attributes is always free. He re-gains his birth-right of freedom, and gives up for ever the shameful guise of a slave which he has imposed upon himself by ignorance.

Devotion to the Lord leads to Moksha.

29. भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ २९

Bhoktaram yajnatapasam sarvaloka mahesvaram ।
suhridam sarvabhutanam jnatva mam santimricchati ॥ 29

Meaning : यज्ञतपसाम् *yajnatapasam* : of sacrifices and austerities, भोक्तारम् *bhoktaram* : enjoyer, सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् *sarvalokamahesvaram* : Lord of all the worlds, सर्वभूतानाम् *sarvabhutanam* : of all beings, सुहृदम् *suhridam* : friend, माम् *mam* : Me, ज्ञात्वा *jnatva* : having known, शान्तिम् *santim* : peace, ऋच्छति *ricchati* : attains.

Substance : Knowing Me as the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Lord and controller of all the worlds, friend of all beings, man attains peace.

Commentary : It is stated here that he who knows the Lord (*Atma*) attains peace. Three attributes of the Lord are mentioned here.

God is described as the enjoyer of the fruits of all sacrifices and austerities performed by men. God is all-pervading and so He is the inner power of all beings. Consequently he is the enjoyer of the fruits all the meritorious work done by man.

God is the supreme Lord of all the worlds. There is no power higher or equal to Him.

Friend of all beings : Though He is the Lord and Controller of all the worlds, He is the greatest friend of all beings. A friend is one who does good to another without expecting any return. What does God require of man? Nothing. And yet He is full of love for man and acts like the greatest friend and benefactor. The very fact that He directly teaches the wisdom of the Gita to man-kind is the proof of His compassion for suffering humanity. If one enquires into the nature of man and the universe around him, he would understand the infinite compassion of the Lord and his ceaseless endeavour to do the highest good to all beings.

The seeker who understands God in this way attains peace. Every one is seeking for peace. Here is the easy path of devotion to the Lord, which leads to peace and freedom. One

should try to understand the attributes of God to know Him intimately. This confirms and strengthens his devotion. When the Lord says that He is a friend (*suhrit*) of all beings, it would be sufficient to think of him as the nearest and dearest companion, on whom one can depend for help and guidance in his *sadhana*.

Man has degraded himself by his lack of faith in the Lord. This is the main cause of unrest in the world. Men run hither and thither begging for small rewards from people holding small meterial authority. The Lord who is the King of Kings, who is the repositary of all power and blessedness, by whose power the Sun shines and the winds blow, is forgotten by ignorant man. Saints and sages have proclaimed in one voice the immediate presence of God everywhere, and yet their words do not carry any weight with him. People have made themselves so low and weak that they put their faith in common mortals who are subject to all personal weaknesses. Let people understand that the Lord is the supreme friend of all. By devotion to Him, man attains peace.

One should note here that the whole Discourse is based on the principles of self-control, enquiry into the Self. Knowledge of *Atma* is emphasised over and over, and yet in this closing Verse the Lord strikes the note of devotion (*bhakti*) and intimacy with God as friend as the way to peace. By the grace of God alone it is possible for man to cross the mire of delusion, and establish his oneness with the Supreme Reality (*Brahman*).

Question : *What is the way to peace ?*

Answer : Understanding and worship of the Lord and meditation on Him is the way to peace.

Question: *What attributes of the Lord are mentioned here ?*

Answere : He is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities; He is the Lord of all the worlds; He is the friend of all beings.

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे
श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे कर्मसंन्यासयोगो नाम
पञ्चमोऽध्यायः ॥

Iti Srimad Bhagavadgitasupanishatsu brahmavidyayam yogasastre Sri Krishnarjuna samvade Karma Yogo nama panchamo 'dhyayah.

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the Science of the Eternal, the Scripture of *Yoga*, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, ends the Fifth Discourse entitled *Karma Sannyasa Yoga*

(The *Yoga* of the Renunciation of Action.)